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S E R M O N S

PREACHED Upon

Several OCCASIONS.

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S I X V O L U M E S.

B Y

ROBERT SOUTH, D. D. K

Late Prebendary of WESTMINSTER,
and Canon of *Christ-Church*, OXON.

W I T H T H E

Chief HEADS of the S E R M O N S

Prefix'd to each VOLUME;

And a general INDEX of the principal Matters.



L O N D O N :

Printed for H. LINTOT, in *Fleetstreet*.

MDCCXXXVII.

SEVERAL OCCASIONS

INTERPRETED UPON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS

BY

BY

ROBERT GORDON, D.D.

Author of the

and

of the

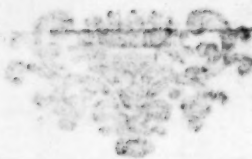


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SERMONS

PREACHED Upon

Several OCCASIONS.

By ROBERT SOUTH, D.D.

V O L. I.

Containing the following SUBJECTS, *viz.*

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|--|--|
| I. The Ways of Wisdom
are Ways of Pleasant-
ness. | VII. God's peculiar Regard
to Places set apart for Di-
vine Worship. |
| II. Of the Creation of Man
in the Image of GOD. | VIII. All Contingencies un-
der the Direction of Pro-
vidence. |
| III. Interest deposed, and
Truth restored. | IX. Of worldly Wisdom. |
| IV. Religion the best Reason
of State. | X. Good Intentions an ill
Excuse for bad Actions. |
| V. The Duties of the Epi-
scopal Function. | XI. Of the odious Sin of In-
gratitude. |
| VI. Why Christ's Doctrine
was rejected by the <i>Jews</i> . | XII. Of the base Sins of
Falshood and Lying. |
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L O N D O N :

Printed for H. LINTOT, in *Fleetstreet*.

MDCCXXXVII.

SERMONS

To the Right Honourable

Lord Bishop of London

EDWARD

Baron of Exeter

Lord High Chancellor of England

and Archbishop of Canterbury

in the City of London

on the 10th of June 1704

at the Chapel of St. Dunstons

in the County of Middlesex

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

at the Church of St. Dunstons

To the Right Honourable

EDWARD

Earl of CLARENDON,

Lord High-Chancellor of England, and Chancellor of the University of Oxon, and one of His MAJESTY's most Honourable Privy-Council.

MY LORD,

THough to prefix so great a Name to so mean a * Piece, seems like enlarging the Entrance of an House that affords no Reception : yet since there is nothing can warrant the Publication of it, but what can also command it, the Work must think of no other Patronage than the same that adorns and protects its Author. Some indeed, vouch

* This Dedication was to the first Sermon.

The EPISTLE

great Names, because they think they deserve ; but I, because I need such : and, had I not more Occasion than many others to see and converse with your Lordship's Candor and Proneness to pardon, there is none had greater Cause to dread your Judgment ; and thereby in some Part, I venture to commend my own. For all know, who know your Lordship, that in a nobler Respect, than either that of Government or Patronage, You represent and head the best of Universities, and have travelled over too many Nations and Authors to encourage any one that understands himself, to appear an Author in your Hands, who seldom read any Books to inform yourself, but only to countenance and credit them. But, my Lord, what is here published, pretends no Instruction, but only Homage ; while it teaches many of the World, it only describes your Lordship ;

DEDICATORY.

ship; who have made the Ways of Labour and Virtue, of Doing, and doing Good, your Business and your Recreation, your Meat and your Drink, and, I may add also, your Sleep. My Lord, the Subject here treated of, is of that Nature, that it would seem but a Chimera, and a bold Paradox, did it not in the very Front carry an Instance to exemplify it; and so by the Dedication convince the World, that the Discourse itself was not impracticable. For such ever was, and is, and will be the Temper of the generality of Mankind, that, while I send Men for Pleasure, to Religion, I cannot but expect, that they will look upon me, as only having a Mind to be pleasant with them myself: Nor are Men to be worded into new Tempers, or Constitutions; and he that thinks that any one can persuade, but He that made the World, will find that he does not well understand it.

My

The EPISTLE, &c.

My Lord, I have obeyed your Command, for such must I account your Desire ; and thereby design, not so much the Publication of my Sermon, as of my Obedience : For, next to the Supreme Pleasure described in the ensuing Discourse, I enjoy none greater, than in having any Opportunity to declare myself,

Your Lordship's

Very humble Servant,

and obliged Chaplain,

Robert South.

THE

THE
Chief HEADS
OF THE
SERMONS *in* VOL. I.

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Will

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THE
Ways of WISDOM

ARE
Ways of Pleasantness.

A
SERMON preach'd at Court.

VOL. I.

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SERMON I.

The Ways of Wisdom are
Ways of Pleasantness.

PROV. iii. 17.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness.

THE Text relating to something going before, must carry our eye back to the thirteenth *verse*, where we shall find, that the thing, of which these words are affirmed, is Wisdom: A name by which the Spirit of God was here pleased to express to us Religion, and thereby to tell the world, what before it was not aware of, and perhaps will not yet believe, that those two great things that so engross the desires and designs of both the nobler and ignobler sort of mankind, are to be found in Religion; namely, *Wisdom* and *Pleasure*; and that the former

4 *The Ways of Wisdom* Sermon. 1.

is the direct way to the latter, as Religion is to both.

That pleasure is man's chiefest good, (because indeed it is the perception of good that is properly pleasure) is an assertion most certainly true, though, under the common acceptance of it, not only false, but odious : For, according to this, pleasure and sensuality pass for terms equivalent ; and, therefore, he that takes it in this sense, alters the subject of the discourse. Sensuality is indeed a part, or rather one kind of pleasure, such an one as it is : for pleasure in general, is the consequent apprehension of a suitable object, suitably applied to a rightly-disposed faculty ; and so must be conversant both about the faculties of the body, and of the soul respectively ; as being the result of the fruitions belonging to both.

Now amongst those many arguments used to press upon men the exercise of Religion, I know none that are like to be so successful, as those that answer and remove the prejudices that generally possess, and bar up the hearts of men against it : amongst which, there is none so prevalent in truth, though so little owned in pretence, as that it is an enemy to mens pleasures, that it bereaves them of all the sweets of converse, dooms
them

Serm. 1. *are Ways of Pleasantness.* 5

them to an absurd and perpetual melancholy, designing to make the world nothing else but a great monastery. With which notion of Religion, Nature and Reason seem to have great cause to be dissatisfied. For, since God never created any faculty, either in soul or body, but withal prepared for it a suitable object, and that in order to its gratification; can we think that Religion was design'd only for a contradiction to Nature? And, with the greatest and most irrational tyranny in the world, to tantalize and tie men up from enjoyment, in the midst of all the opportunities of enjoyment? To place men with the furious affections of hunger and thirst in the very bosom of plenty; and then to tell them, that the envy of Providence has sealed up every thing that is *suitable* under the character of *unlawful*? For certainly, first to frame appetites fit to receive pleasure, and then to interdict them with a *Touch not, taste not*, can be nothing else, than only to give them occasion to devour and prey upon themselves; and so to keep men under the perpetual torment of an unsatisfied desire: A thing hugely contrary to the natural felicity of the creature, and consequently to the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator.

He therefore that would persuade men to Religion, both with art and efficacy, must found the persuasion of it upon this, that it interferes not with any rational pleasure, that it bids nobody quit the enjoyment of any one thing that his reason can prove to him ought to be enjoyed. 'Tis confess'd, when through the cross circumstances of a man's temper or condition, the enjoyment of a pleasure would certainly expose him to a greater inconvenience, then Religion bids him quit it; that is, it bids him prefer the endurance of a lesser evil before a greater, and Nature itself does no less. Religion therefore intrenches upon none of our privileges, invades none of our pleasures; it may indeed sometimes command us to *change*, but never totally to *abjure* them.

But it is easily foreseen, that this discourse will in the very beginning of it be encounter'd by an argument from experience, and therefore not more obvious than strong; namely, that it cannot but be the greatest trouble in the world for a man thus (as it were) even to shake off himself, and to defy his Nature, by a perpetual thwarting of his innate appetites and desires; which yet is absolutely necessary to a severe and impartial prosecution of a course of piety: Nay, and we
have

Serm. 1. *are Ways of Pleasantness.* 7

have this asserted also, by the verdict of Christ himself, who still makes the disciplines of self-denial and the cross, those terrible blows to flesh and blood, the indispensable requisites to the being of his disciples. All which being so, would not he that should be so hardy as to attempt to persuade men to piety from the pleasures of it, be liable to that invective taunt from all mankind, that the *Israelites* gave to *Moses*; *Wilt thou put out the eyes of this People?* Wilt thou persuade us out of our first notions? Wilt thou demonstrate, that there is any delight in a cross, any comfort in violent abridgments, and, which is the greatest paradox of all, that the highest pleasure is to abstain from it?

For answer to which, it must be confess'd, that all arguments whatsoever against experience are fallacious; and therefore, in order to the clearing of the assertion laid down, I shall premise these two considerations:

1. That pleasure is, in the nature of it, a relative thing, and so imports a peculiar relation and correspondence to the state and condition of the person to whom it is a pleasure. For as those who discourse of atoms, affirm, that there are atoms of all forms, some round, some triangular, some square, and

the like ; all which are continually in motion, and never settle till they fall into a fit circumscription or place of the same figure : so there are the like great diversities of minds and objects. Whence it is, that this object striking upon a mind thus or thus disposed, flies off, and rebounds, without making any impression ; but the same luckily happening upon another of a disposition, as it were, fram'd for it, is presently catch'd at, and greedily clasp'd into the nearest unions and embraces.

2. The other thing to be consider'd, is this : That the estate of all men by Nature is more or less different from that estate, into which the same persons do, or may pass, by the exercise of that which the philosophers called *virtue*, and into which men are much more effectually and sublimely translated by that which we call *grace* ; that is, by the supernatural over-powering operation of God's Spirit. The difference of which two estates consists in this ; that in the former the sensitive appetites rule and domineer ; in the latter the supreme faculty of the soul, call'd *Reason*, sways the scepter, and acts the whole man above the irregular demands of appetite and affection.

That

Serm. 1. *are Ways of Pleasantness.* 9

That the distinction between these two is not a mere figment, framed only to serve an hypothesis in divinity; and that there is no man but is really under one, before he is under the other, I shall prove, by shewing a reason why it is so, or rather indeed why it cannot but be so. And it is this: Because every man in the beginning of his life, for several years is capable only of exercising his sensitive faculties and desires, the use of reason not shewing itself till about the seventh year of his age; and then at length but (as it were) dawning in very imperfect essays and discoveries. Now it being most undeniably evident, that every faculty and power grows stronger and stronger by exercise; is it any wonder at all, when a man for the space of his first six years, and those the years of ductility and impression, has been wholly ruled by the propensions of sense, at that age very eager and impetuous; that then, after all, his reason beginning to exert and put forth itself, finds the man prepossessed, and under another power? So that it has much ado, by many little steps and gradual conquests, to recover its prerogative from the usurpations of appetite, and so to subject the whole man to its dictates: The difficulty of which is not conquered by some men all
their

their days. And this is one true ground of the difference between a state of Nature, and a state of Grace, which some are pleased to scoff at in divinity, who think that they confute all that they laugh at, not knowing that it may be solidly evinced by mere reason and philosophy.

These two considerations being premised, namely, that pleasure implies a proportion and agreement to the respective states and conditions of men; and that the estate of men by Nature is vastly different from the estate into which Grace or Virtue transplants them; all that objection levell'd against the foregoing assertion is very easily resolvable.

For, there is no doubt, but a man, while he resigns himself up to the brutish guidance of sense and appetite, has no relish at all for the spiritual, refined delights of a Soul clarified by grace and virtue. The pleasures of an angel can never be the pleasures of a hog. But this is the thing that we contend for; that a man having once advanced himself to a state of superiority over the controul of his inferior appetites, finds an infinitely more solid and sublime pleasure in the delights proper to his reason, than the same person had ever conveyed to him by the bare ministry of his senses. His taste

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is absolutely changed, and therefore that which pleased him formerly, becomes flat and insipid to his appetite, now grown more masculine and severe. For, as age and maturity passes a real and a marvellous change upon the diet and recreations of the same person; so that no man at the years and vigour of thirty, is either fond of sugar-plums or rattles: in like manner, when Reason, by the assistance of Grace, has prevail'd over, and out-grown the encroachments of sense, the delights of sensuality are to such an one but as an hobby-horse would be to a counsellor of state; or as tasteless, as a bundle of hay to a hungry lion. Every alteration of a man's condition infallibly infers an alteration of his pleasures.

The *Athenians* laughed the physiognomist to scorn, who, pretending to read mens minds in their foreheads, describ'd *Socrates* for a crabbed, lustful, proud, ill-natured person; they knowing how directly contrary he was to that dirty character. But *Socrates* bad them forbear laughing at the man, for that he had given them a most exact account of his nature; but what they saw in him so contrary at the present, was from the conquest that he had got over his natural disposition by philosophy. And now let
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any one consider, whether that *anger*, that *revenge*, that *wantonness* and *ambition*, that were the proper pleasures of *Socrates*, under his natural temper of *crabbed*, *lustful*, and *proud*, could have at all affected or enamour'd the mind of the same *Socrates*, made gentle, chaste, and humble by philosophy.

Aristotle says, that were it possible to put a young man's eye into an old man's head, he would see as plainly and clearly as the other ; so, could we infuse the inclinations and principles of a virtuous person into him that prosecutes his debauches with the greatest keenness of desire, and sense of delight, he would loath and reject them as heartily, as he now pursues them. *Diogenes*, being asked at a feast, why he did not continue eating as the rest did, answered him that asked him with another question, Pray, why do you eat ? Why, says he, for my pleasure ; Why, so, says *Diogenes*, do I abstain for my pleasure. And therefore the vain, the vicious, and luxurious person argues at an high rate of inconsequence, when he makes his particular desires, the general measure of other mens delights. But the case is so plain, that I shall not upbraid any man's understanding, by endeavouring to give it any farther illustration.

But

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But still, after all, I must not deny that the change and passage from a state of Nature, to a state of Virtue, is laborious, and, consequently, irksome and unpleasant: And to this it is, that all the foremention'd expressions of our Saviour do allude. But surely the baseness of one condition, and the generous excellency of the other, is a sufficient argument to induce any one to a change. For as no man would think it a desirable thing, to preserve the itch upon himself, only for the pleasure of scratching that attends that loathsome distemper: so neither can any man, that would be faithful to his reason, yield his ear to be bored through by his domineering appetites, and so chuse to serve them for ever, only for those poor, thin gratifications of sensuality that they are able to reward him with. The ascent up the hill is hard and tedious, but the serenity and fair prospect at the top, is sufficient to incite the labour of undertaking it, and to reward it being undertook. But the difference of these two conditions of men, as the foundation of their different pleasures, being thus made out, to press men with arguments to pass from one to another, is not directly in the way or design of this discourse.

Yet,

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Yet, before I come to declare positively the pleasures that are to be found in the *ways* of Religion, one of the grand duties of which is stated upon repentance; a thing expressed to us by the grim names of mortification, crucifixion, and the like: and that I may not proceed only upon absolute negations, without some concessions; we will see, whether this so harsh, dismal, and affrighting duty of repentance is so intirely gall, as to admit of no mixture, no allay of sweetness, to reconcile it to the apprehensions of Reason and Nature.

Now Repentance consists properly of two things:

1. Sorrow for sin.
2. Change of life.

A word briefly of them both.

1. And first of *Sorrow for sin*: Usually, the sting of sorrow is this, that it neither removes nor alters the thing we sorrow for; and so is but a kind of reproach to our reason, which will be sure to accost us with this dilemma. Either the thing we sorrow for, is to be remedied, or it is not: If it is, why then do we spend the time in mourning, which should be spent in an active applying of remedies? But if it is not; then is our sorrow vain and superfluous, as tending to

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no real effect. For no man can weep his father, or his friend out of the grave, or mourn himself out of a bankrupt condition. But this spiritual sorrow is effectual to one of the greatest and highest purposes that mankind can be concern'd in. It is a means to avert an impendent wrath, to disarm an offended Omnipotence; and even to fetch a soul out of the very jaws of hell. So that the end and consequence of this sorrow sweetens the sorrow itself: And, as *Solomon* says, *In the midst of laughter, the heart is sorrowful*; so, in the midst of sorrow here, the heart may rejoice: For while it mourns, it reads, that *those that mourn shall be comforted*; and so while the penitent weeps with one eye, he views his deliverance with the other. But then for the external expressions, and vent of sorrow; we know that there is a certain pleasure in weeping; it is the discharge of a big and a swelling grief; of a full and a strangling discontent; and therefore, he that never had such a burden upon his heart, as to give him opportunity thus to ease it, has one pleasure in this *World* yet to come.

2. As for the other part of repentance, which is Change of life, this indeed may be trouble-

troublesome in the entrance ; yet it is but the first bold onset, the first resolute violence and invasion upon a vicious habit, that is so sharp and afflicting. Every impression of the lancet cuts, but it is the first only that smarts. Besides, it is an argument hugely unreasonable, to plead the pain of passing *from* a vicious estate, unless it were proved, that there was none in the continuance *under* it : But surely, when we read of the *service*, the *bondage*, and the *captivity* of *sinners*, we are not entertain'd only with the air of words and metaphors ; and, instead of truth, put off with similitudes. Let him that says it is a trouble to refrain from a debauch, convince us, that it is not a greater to undergo one ; and that the confessor did not impose a shrewd penance upon the drunken man, by bidding him go and be drunk again ; and that lisp- ing, raging, redness of eyes, and what is not fit to be nam'd in such an audience, is not more toilsome, than to be clean, and quiet, and discreet, and respected for being so. All the trouble that is in it, is the trouble of being sound, being cured, and being recovered. But if there be great arguments for health, then certainly there are the same for the obtaining of it ; and so, keeping a due proportion

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portion between Spirituals and Temporals, we neither have, nor pretend to greater arguments for Repentance.

Having thus now cleared off all, that by way of objection can lie against the truth asserted, by shewing the proper qualification of the subject, to whom only the *Ways of Wisdom* can be *Ways of Pleasantness*; for the farther prosecution of the matter in hand, I shall shew what are those properties that so peculiarly set off, and enhance the excellency of this pleasure.

1. The first is, That it is the proper pleasure of that part of man, which is the largest and most comprehensive of pleasure, and that is his mind: A substance of a boundless comprehension. The mind of man is an image, not only of God's Spirituality, but of his Infinity. It is not like any of the senses, limited to this or that kind of object: As the sight intermeddles not with that which affects the smell; but with an universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon and takes them in all. It is (as I may so say) an ocean, into which all the little rivulets of sensation, both external and internal, discharge themselves. It is framed by God to receive all, and more than nature can afford it; and so to be its own motive to seek for something above nature. Now

this is that part of man, to which the pleasures of Religion properly belong : And that in a double respect ;

1. In reference to speculation, as it sustains the name of understanding.

2. In reference to practice, as it sustains the name of conscience.

1. And first for speculation : The pleasures of which have been sometimes so great, so intense, so ingrossing of all the powers of the soul, that there has been no room left for any other pleasure. It has so called together all the spirits to that one work, that there has been no supply to carry on the inferior operations of nature. Contemplation feels no hunger, nor is sensible of any thirst, but of that after knowledge. How frequent and exalted a pleasure did *David* find from his meditation in the Divine Law ! *All the Day long* it was the theme of his thoughts. The affairs of State, the government of his Kingdom, might indeed employ, but it was this only that *refreshed* his mind.

How short of this are the delights of the Epicure ? How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating, and of the thinking man ? Indeed as different as the silence of an *Archimedes* in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a sow at her wash. Nothing is
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comparable to the pleasure of an active, and a prevailing thought : A thought prevailing over the difficulty and obscurity of the object, and refreshing the soul with new discoveries, and images of things ; and thereby extending the bounds of apprehension, and (as it were) enlarging the territories of reason.

Now this pleasure of the speculation of divine things, is advanced upon a double account.

(1.) The greatness.

(2.) The newness of the object.

(1.) And first for the greatness of it. It is no less than the great God himself, and that both in his nature, and his works. For the eye of reason, like that of the eagle, directs itself chiefly to the sun, to a glory that neither admits of a superior, nor an equal. Religion carries the soul to the study of every divine attribute.

It possesses it with the amazing thoughts of Omnipotence ; of a power able to fetch up such a glorious fabrick, as this of the world, out of the abyss of vanity and nothing, and able to throw it back into the same original nothing again. It drowns us in the speculation of the Divine Omniscience ; that can maintain a steady infallible comprehension of all events in themselves contingent and accidental ;

dental ; and certainly know that, which does not certainly exist. It confounds the greatest subtilties of speculation, with the riddles of God's Omnipresence ; that can spread a single individual substance through all spaces ; and yet without any commensuration of parts to any, or circumscription *within* any, though totally in every one. And then for his Eternity ; which *non-plusses* the strongest and clearest conception, to comprehend how one single act of duration should measure all periods and portions of time, without any of the distinguishing parts of succession. Likewise for his Justice ; which shall prey upon the sinner for ever, satisfying itself by a perpetual miracle, rendring the creature immortal in the midst of the flames ; always consuming, but never consumed. With the like wonders we may entertain our speculations from his Mercy ; his beloved, his triumphant attribute ; an attribute, if it were possible, something more than infinite ; for even his Justice is so, and his Mercy transcends that. Lastly, we may contemplate upon his supernatural, astonishing works : particularly in the resurrection, and reparation of the same numerical body, by a re-union of all the scattered parts, to be at length disposed of into an estate of eternal woe or bliss ; as also the greatness and strangeness of

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of the beatifick vision ; how a created eye should be so fortify'd, as to bear all those glories that stream from the fountain of uncreated light, the meanest expression of which light is, that it is unexpressible. Now what great and high objects are these, for a rational contemplation to busy itself upon? Heights that scorn the reach of our prospect ; and depths in which the tallest reason will never touch the bottom : yet surely the pleasure arising from thence is great and noble ; forasmuch as they afford perpetual matter and employment to the inquisitiveness of human reason ; and so are large enough for it to take its full scope and range in : Which, when it has sucked and drain'd the utmost of an object, naturally lays it aside, and neglects it as a dry and empty thing.

(2.) As the things belonging to Religion entertain our speculation with great objects, so they entertain it also with new : And novelty we know is the great parent of pleasure ; upon which account it is that men are so much pleased with variety, and variety is nothing else but a continued novelty. The *Athenians*, who were the professed and most diligent improvers of their reason, made it their whole business *to hear or to tell some new thing* : For the truth is, newness, especially in great matters,

matters, was a worthy entertainment for a searching mind ; it was (as I may so say) an high taste, fit for the relish of an *Athenian* reason. And thereupon the mere unheard-of strangeness of *Jesus* and the Resurrection, made them desirous to hear it discoursed of to them again, *Acts* xvii. 23. But how would it have employed their searching faculties, had the mystery of the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole oeconomy of man's redemption, been explained to them ? For how could it ever enter into the thoughts of reason, that a satisfaction could be paid to an infinite Justice ? Or, that two Natures so unconceivably different, as the human and divine, could unite into one person ? The knowledge of these things could derive from nothing else but pure revelation, and consequently must be purely *new* to the highest discourses of mere Nature. Now that the newness of an object so exceedingly pleases and strikes the mind, appears from this one consideration ; that every thing pleases more in expectation than fruition : And expectation supposes a thing as yet new, the hoped-for discovery of which is the pleasure that entertains the expecting, and inquiring mind : Whereas actual discovery (as it were) rifles and deflowers the newness and freshness of the object, and so, for the
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the most part, makes it cheap, familiar, and contemptible.

It is clear therefore, that, if there be any pleasure to the mind from speculation, and if this pleasure of speculation be advanced by the greatness and newness of the things contemplated upon, all this is to be found in the way of Religion.

2. In the next place, Religion is a pleasure to the mind, as it respects practice, and so sustains the name of conscience. And conscience undoubtedly is the great repository and magazine of all those pleasures that can afford any solid refreshment to the soul. For when this is calm, and serene, and absolving, then, properly, a man enjoys all things, and what is more, himself; for that he must do, before he can enjoy any thing else. But it is only a pious life, led exactly by the rules of a severe Religion, that can authorize a man's conscience to speak comfortably to him: It is this that must word the sentence, before the conscience can pronounce it, and then it will do it with majesty and authority: It will not whisper, but proclaim a *Jubilee* to the mind; it will not drop, but pour in oil upon the wounded heart. And is there any pleasure comparable to that which springs from hence? The pleasure of conscience is not only greater

than all other pleasures, but may also serve instead of them : For they only please and affect the mind *in transitu*, in the pitiful narrow compass of actual fruition ; whereas that of conscience entertains and feeds it a long time after with durable, lasting reflections.

And thus much for the first ennobling property of the pleasure belonging to Religion ; namely, That it is the pleasure of the mind ; and that both as it relates to speculation, and is called the understanding, and as it relates to practice, and is called the conscience.

II. The second ennobling property of it is, That it is such a pleasure as never fatiates, or wearies : For it properly affects the spirit, and a spirit feels no weariness, as being privileged from the causes of it. But can the Epicure say so of any of the pleasures that he so much dotes upon ? Do they not expire while they satisfy ? And after a few minutes refreshment, determine in loathing and unquietness ? How short is the interval between a pleasure and a burden ? How undiscernible the transition from one to the other ? Pleasure dwells no longer upon the appetite, than the necessities of Nature, which are quickly and easily provided for ; and then all that follows, is a load and an oppression. Every morsel to a satisfied hunger, is only a new labour

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labour to a tired digestion. Every draught to him that has quench'd his thirst, is but a farther quenching of Nature; a provision for rheum and diseases, a drowning of the quickness, and activity of the spirits.

He that prolongs his meals, and sacrifices his time, as well as his other conveniences, to his luxury, how quickly does he out-fit his pleasure? And then, how is all the following time bestowed upon ceremony and surfeit? till at length, after a long fatigue of eating, and drinking, and babling, he concludes the great work of dining genteelly, and so makes a shift to rise from table, that he may lie down upon his bed: Where, after he has slept himself into some use of himself, by much ado he staggers to his table again, and there acts over the same brutish scene: so that he passes his whole life in a dozed condition, between sleeping and waking, with a kind of drowsiness and confusion upon his senses; which, what pleasure can it be, is hard to conceive; all that is of it, dwells upon the tip of his tongue, and within the compass of his palate: A worthy prize for a man to purchase with the loss of his time, his reason, and himself.

Nor is that man less deceived, that thinks to maintain a constant tenure of pleasure, by

a continual pursuit of sports and recreations : For it is most certainly true of all these things, that as they refresh a man when he is weary, so they weary him when he is refreshed ; which is an evident demonstration that God never design'd the use of them to be continual ; by putting such an emptiness in them, as should so quickly fail and lurch the expectation.

The most voluptuous and loose person breathing, were he but tied to follow his hawks and his hounds, his dice and his courtships every day, would find it the greatest torment and calamity that could befall him ; he would fly to the *mines* and the *galleys* for his recreation, and to the *spade* and the *mattock* for a diversion from the misery of a continual un-intermitted pleasure.

But, on the contrary, the providence of God has so ordered the course of things, that there is no action, the usefulness of which has made it the matter of duty, and of a profession, but a man may bear the continual pursuit of it, without loathing or satiety. The same shop and trade, that employs a man in his youth, employs him also in his age. Every morning he rises fresh to his hammer and his anvil ; he passes the day singing : custom has naturalized his labour to him : his shop is his element, and he cannot, with any enjoyment of himself, live out of it. Whereas no custom can make the painfulness

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ness of a debauch easy, or pleasing to a man ; since nothing can be pleasant that is unnatural. But now, if God has interwoven such a pleasure with the works of our ordinary calling ; how much superior and more refined must that be, that arises from the survey of a pious and well-govern'd life ? Surely, as much as christianity is nobler than a trade.

And then, for the constant freshness of it ; it is such a pleasure as can never cloy or overwork the mind : For, surely no man was ever weary of *thinking*, much less of thinking that he had done well or virtuously, that he had conquered such and such a temptation, or offered violence to any of his exorbitant desires. This is a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflection : And while it exercises, does also endear itself to the mind ; at the same time employing and inflaming the meditations. All pleasures that affect the body, must needs weary, because they transport ; and all transportation is a violence ; and no violence can be lasting, but determines upon the falling of the spirits, which are not able to keep up that height of motion that the pleasure of the senses raises them to : And therefore how inevitably does an immoderate laughter end in a sigh ? which is only nature's recovering itself after a force done

done to it. But the religious pleasure of a well-disposed mind, moves gently, and therefore constantly : It does not affect by rapture and ecstasy ; but is like the pleasure of health, which is still and sober, yet greater and stronger than those that *call up* the senses, and grosser and more affecting impressions. God has given no man a body as strong as his appetites ; but has corrected the boundlessness of his voluptuous desires, by stinting his strength, and contracting his capacities.

But to look upon those pleasures also, that have an higher object than the body ; as those that spring from honour and grandeur of condition ; yet we shall find, that even these are not so fresh and constant, but the mind can nauseate them, and quickly feel the thinness of a popular breath. Those that are so fond of applause while they pursue it, how little do they taste it when they have it ? Like lightning, it only flashes upon the face, and is gone, and it is well if it does not hurt the man. But for greatness of place, though it is fit and necessary, that some persons in the world should be in love with a splendid servitude ; yet certainly they must be much beholden to their own fancy, that they can be pleased at it. For he that rises up early, and goes to bed late, only to receive addresses, to
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read and answer petitions, is really as much tied and abridg'd in his freedom, as he that waits all that time to present one. And what pleasure can it be to be incumbred with dependences, thronged and furrounded with petitioners? and those perhaps sometimes all suitors for the same thing: Whereupon all but one will be sure to depart grumbling, because they miss of what they think their due: And even that *one* scarce thankful, because he thinks he has no more than his due. In a word, if it is a pleasure to be envied and shot at, to be maligned *standing*, and to be despised *falling*, to endeavour that which is impossible, which is to please all, and to suffer for not doing it; then is it a pleasure to be great, and to be able to dispose of mens fortunes and preferments.

But farther, to proceed from hence to yet an higher degree of pleasure, indeed the highest on this side that of Religion; which is the pleasure of friendship and conversation: Friendship must confessedly be allowed the top, the flower, and crown of all temporal enjoyments. Yet has not this also its flaws and its dark side? For is not my friend a man? and is not friendship subject to the same mortality and change that men are? And in case a man loves, and is not loved again, does he not think that he has cause to hate as heartily,

tilly, and ten times more eagerly than ever he loved? And then *to be* an enemy, and once *to have been* a friend, does it not imbitter the rupture, and aggravate the calamity? But admitting that my friend continues so to the end; yet in the mean time, is he all perfection, all virtue, and discretion? Has he not *humours* to be endured, as well as *kindnesses* to be enjoyed? And am I sure to smell the rose, without sometimes feeling the thorn?

And then lastly, for company; though it may *reprieve* a man from his melancholy, yet it cannot secure him from his conscience, nor from sometimes being alone. And what is all that a man enjoys, from a week's, a month's, or a year's converse, comparable to what he feels for one hour, when his conscience shall take him aside, and rate him by himself?

In short, run over the whole circle of all earthly pleasures, and I dare affirm, that had not God secured a man a solid pleasure from his own actions, after he had rolled from one to another, and enjoyed them all, he would be forced to complain, that either they were not indeed pleasures, or that pleasure was not satisfaction.

III. The third ennobling property of the pleasure that accrues to a man from Religion, is, that it is such an one as is in nobody's power, but only in his that has it; so that he
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who has the property, may be also sure of the perpetuity. And tell me so of any outward enjoyment, that mortality is capable of. We are generally at the mercy of mens rapine, avarice, and violence, whether we shall be happy or no. For if I build my felicity upon my estate or reputation, I am happy as long as the tyrant, or the railer will give me leave to be so. But when my concernment takes up no more room or compass than myself; then so long as I know where to breathe, and to exist, I know also where to be happy: For I know I may be so in my own breast, in the court of my own conscience; where, if I can but prevail with myself *to be* innocent, I need bribe neither judge nor officer to be *pronounced* so. The pleasure of the religious man, is an easy and a portable pleasure, such an one as he carries about in his bosom, without alarming either the eye, or envy of the world. A man putting all his pleasures into this one, is like a traveller's putting all his goods into one jewel; the value is the same, and the convenience greater.

There is nothing that can raise a man to that generous absoluteness of condition, as neither to cringe, to fawn, or to depend meanly; but that which gives him that happiness within himself, for which men depend upon others.

others. For surely I need salute no great man's threshold, sneak to none of his friends or servants, to speak a good word for me to my conscience. It is a noble and a sure defiance of a great malice, back'd with a great interest; which yet can have no advantage of a man, but from his own expectations of something that is without himself. But if I can make my duty my delight; if I can feast, and please, and caress my mind with the pleasures of worthy speculations, or virtuous practices; let greatness and malice vex and abridge me if they can: My pleasures are as free as my Will; no more to be controlled than my choice, or the unlimited range of my thoughts, and my desires.

Nor is this kind of pleasure only out of the reach of any outward violence, but even those things also that make a much closer impression upon us, which are the irresistible decays of nature, have yet no influence at all upon this. For when age itself, which, of all things in the world will not not be baffled or defied, shall begin to arrest, seize, and remind us of our mortality, by pains, aches, deadness of limbs, and dulness of senses; yet then the pleasure of the mind shall be in its full youth, vigour, and freshness. A palsy may as well shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair the
delight

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delight of conscience. For it lies within, it centres in the heart, it grows into the very substance of the soul, so that it accompanies a man to his grave; he never out-lives it, and that for this cause only, because he cannot out-live himself.

And thus I have endeavoured to describe the excellency of that *pleasure* that is to be found in the *ways* of a *religious wisdom*, by those excellent properties that do attend it; which whether they reach the description that has been given them, or no, every man may convince himself, by the best of demonstrations, which is his own trial.

Now, from all this discourse, this I am sure is a most natural and direct consequence, that if the ways of *Religion* are ways of *pleasantness*, such as are not ways of *pleasantness*, are not truly and properly ways of *Religion*. Upon which ground it is easy to see what judgment is to be passed upon all those affected, uncommanded, absurd austerities, so much prized, and exercised by some of the *Romish* profession. Pilgrimages, going barefoot, hair-shirts, and whips, with other such gospel artillery, are their only helps to devotion: Things never enjoined, either by the prophets under the *Jewish*, or by the apostles under the Christian oeconomy; who yet surely understood

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the proper, and the most efficacious instruments of piety, as well as any confessor, or friar of all the order of St. *Francis*, or any casuist whatsoever.

It seems, that with them, a man sometimes cannot be a penitent, unless he also turns vagabond, and foots it to *Jerusalem* ; or wanders over this or that part of the world to visit the shrine of such or such a pretended saint ; though perhaps, in his life, ten times more ridiculous than themselves : Thus, that which was *Cain's* curse, is become their Religion. He that thinks to expiate a sin by going bare-foot, only makes one folly the atonement for another *Paul* indeed was scourged and beaten by the *Jews*, but we never read that he beat or scourged himself : And if they think *that his keeping under of his body* imports so much, they must first prove, that the body cannot be kept under by a virtuous mind, and that the mind cannot be made virtuous but by a scourge ; and consequently, that *thongs* and *whipcord* are means of grace, and things necessary to salvation. The truth is, if mens Religion lies no deeper than their skin, it is possible that they may scourge themselves into very great improvements.

But they will find that *bodily exercise* touches not the soul ; and that neither pride, nor lust,

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nor covetousness, nor any other vice was ever mortified by corporal disciplines: 'Tis not the back, but the heart that must bleed for sin: And consequently, that in this whole course they are like men out of their way; let them lash on never so fast, they are not at all the nearer to their journey's end: And howsoever they deceive themselves and others, they may as well expect to bring a cart, as a soul to heaven by such means. What arguments they have to beguile poor, simple, unstable souls with, I know not; but surely the practical, casuistical, that is, the principal, vital part of their religion favours very little of spirituality.

And now upon the result of all, I suppose, that to exhort men to be religious, is only in other words to exhort them to take their pleasure. A pleasure high, rational, and angelical; a pleasure embased with no appendent sting, no consequent loathing, no remorse or bitter farewells: But such an one, as, being honey in the mouth, never turns to gall or gravel in the belly. A pleasure made for the soul, and the soul for that; suitable to its spirituality, and equal to all its capacities. Such an one as grows fresher upon enjoyment, and though continually fed upon, yet is never devoured. A pleasure that a man may call as properly his own, as his soul and his consci-

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ence; neither liable to accident, nor exposed to injury. For it is the fore-taste of heaven, and the earnest of eternity. In a word, it is such an one, as being begun in grace, passes into glory, blessedness, and immortality, and those pleasures *that neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entred into the heart of man to conceive.*

To which God of his mercy vouchsafe to bring us all: To whom be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

*Of the Creation of Man in the Image
of G O D.*

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

Cathedral Church of St. *Paul*,

O N

November the 9th, 1662.

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To the Right Honourable the
Lord-Mayor and Aldermen
OF THE
City of LONDON.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

*W*HEN I consider how impossible it is for a person of my condition to produce, and consequently how imprudent to attempt any thing in proportion either to the ampleness of the body you represent, or of the places you bear, I should be kept from venturing so poor a piece, designed to live but an hour, in so lasting a publication ; did not what your civility calls a request, your greatness render a command. The truth is, in things not unlawful great persons cannot be properly said to request ; because, all things considered, they must not be denied. To me it was honour enough to have your audience, enjoyment enough to behold your

happy change, and to see the same city, the metropolis of loyalty, and of the kingdom, to behold the glory of English churches reformed, that is, delivered from the reformers; and to find at least the service of the church repaired, though not the building; to see St. Paul's delivered from beasts here, as well as St. Paul at Ephesus: And to view the church thronged only with troops of auditors, not of horse. This I could fully have acquiesced in, and received a large personal reward in my particular share of the public joy; but since you are farther pleased, I will not say by your judgment, to approve, but by your acceptance to encourage, the raw endeavours of a young divine, I shall take it for an opportunity, not as others in their sage prudence use to do, to quote three or four texts of scripture, and to tell you how you are to rule the city out of a Concordance; no, I bring not instructions, but, what much better befits both you and myself, your commendations. For I look upon your city as the great and magnificent stage of business, and by consequence the best place of improvement; for from the school we go to the university, but from the university to London. And therefore, as in your city-meetings you must be esteemed the most considerable body of the nation, so, met in the church, I look upon you as an auditory fit to be waited on, as you are, by both
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universities. And when I remember how instrumental you have been to recover this universal settlement, and to retrieve the old spirit of loyalty to kings (as an ancient testimony of which you bear not the sword in vain) I seem in a manner deputed from Oxford, not so much a preacher to supply a course, as orator to present her thanks. As for the ensuing discourse, which (lest I chance to be traduced for a plagiarist by him who has play'd the thief) I think fit to tell the world, by the way, was one of those that by a worthy hand were stoln from me in the king's chapel, and are still detained; and to which, now accidentally published by your honour's order, your patronage must give both value and protection. You will find me in it not to have pitch'd upon any subject, that mens guilt, and the consequence of guilt, their concernment, might render liable to exception; not to have rubbed up the memory of what some heretofore in the city did, which more and better now detest, and therefore expiate: but my subject is inoffensive, harmless, and innocent as the State of Innocence itself, and (I hope) suitable to the present design and genius of this nation; which is, or should be, to return to that innocence, which it lost long since the fall. Briefly, my business is, by describing what man was in his first estate, to upbraid him with what he is in his present: between whom

inno-

innocent and fallen (that in a word I may suit the subject to the place of my discourse) there is as great an unlikeness, as between St. Paul's a cathedral, and St. Paul's a stable. But I must not fore-stall myself, nor transcribe the work into the dedication. I shall now only desire you to accept the issue of your own requests; the gratification of which I have here consulted so much before my own reputation; while, like the poor widow, I endeavour to shew my officiousness by an offering, tho' I betray my poverty by the measure; not so much caring, though I appear neither preacher nor scholar, (which terms we have been taught upon good reason to distinguish) so I may in this but shew myself

Your Honours

Very humble Servant,

Worcester-House,
Nov. 24. 1662.

Robert South.

S E R M O N II.

Of the Creation of Man in the Image of G O D.

GENESIS i. 27.

*So God created Man in his own Image, in
the Image of God created he him.*

HOW hard it is for natural reason to discover a creation before revealed, or being revealed to believe it, the strange opinions of the old philosophers, and the infidelity of modern atheists, is too sad a demonstration. To run the world back to its first original and infancy, and (as it were) to view Nature in its cradle, and trace the out-goings of the Ancient of Days in the first instance and specimen of his creative power, is a research too great for any mortal inquiry : And we might continue our
scrutiny

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scrutiny to the end of the world, before natural reason would be able to find out when it begun.

Epicurus's discourse concerning the original of the world is so fabulous, and ridiculously merry, that we may well judge the design of his philosophy to have been pleasure, and not instruction.

Aristotle held, That it streamed by con-natural result and emanation from God, the infinite and eternal Mind, as the light issues from the sun ; so that there was no instant of duration assignable of God's eternal Existence, in which the world did not also co-exist.

Others held a fortuitous concurrence of atoms ; but all seem jointly to explode a Creation ; still beating upon this ground, that *the producing something out of nothing* is impossible and incomprehensible : Incomprehensible indeed I grant, but not therefore impossible. There is not the least transaction of sense and motion in the whole man, but philosophers are at a loss to comprehend, I am sure they are to explain it. Wherefore, it is not always rational to measure the truth of an assertion by the standard of our apprehension.

But to bring things even to the bare Perceptions of reason, I appeal to any one, who shall impartially reflect upon the ideas and con-
ceptions

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ceptions of his own mind, whether he doth not find it as easy and suitable to his natural notions, to conceive that an infinite Almighty Power might produce a thing out of *nothing*, and make that to exist *de novo*, which did not exist before ; as to conceive the world to have had no beginning, but to have existed from eternity : Which, were it so proper for this place and exercise, I could easily demonstrate to be attended with no small train of absurdities. But then, besides that the acknowledging of a creation is safe, and the denial of it dangerous and irreligious, and yet not more (perhaps much less) demonstrable than the affirmative ; so, over and above, it gives me this advantage, that, let it seem never so strange, uncouth, and incomprehensible, the nonplus of my reason will yield a fairer opportunity to my faith.

In this chapter, we have God surveying the works of the creation, and leaving this general impress or character upon them, *that they were exceeding good*. What an Omnipotence wrought, we have an Omniscience to approve. But as it is reasonable to imagine that there is more of design, and consequently more of perfection, in the last work, we have God here giving his last stroke, and summing up all into man, the whole into a part, the universe into

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an individual: So that whereas in other creatures we have but the trace of his footsteps, in man we have the draught of his hand. In him were united all the scattered perfections of the creature, all the graces and ornaments; all the airs and features of being, were abridged into this small, yet full system of Nature and Divinity: As we might well imagine, that the great artificer would be more than ordinarily exact in drawing his own picture.

The work that I shall undertake from these words, shall be to shew what this image of God in man is, and wherein it doth consist. Which I shall do these two ways: 1. Negatively, by shewing wherein it *doth not* consist. 2. Positively, by shewing wherein it *does*.

For the first of these, we are to remove the erroneous opinion of the *Socinians*. They deny that the image of God consisted in any habitual perfections that adorned the soul of *Adam*: But as to his understanding bring him in void of all notion, a rude unwritten blank; making him to be created as much an infant as others are born; sent into the world only to read and to spell out a God in the works of creation, to learn by degrees, till at length his understanding grew up to the stature of his body; also without any inherent habits of virtue in his will; thus divesting him of all,
and

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and stripping him to his bare essence: So that all the perfection they allowed his understanding was aptness and docility; and all that they attributed to his will was a possibility to be virtuous.

But wherein then, according to their opinion, did this Image of God consist? Why, in that power and dominion that God gave *Adam* over the creatures: In that he was vouched his immediate deputy upon earth, the viceroy of the creation, and lord-lieutenant of the world. But that this power and dominion is not *adequately* and *formally* the image of God, but only a part of it, is clear from hence; because then he that had most of this, would have most of God's image: And consequently *Nimrod* had more of it than *Noah*, *Saul* than *Samuel*, the persecutors than the martyrs, and *Cæsar* than Christ himself, which to assert is a blasphemous paradox. And if the image of God is only grandeur, power and sovereignty, certainly we have been hitherto much mistaken in our duty. And hereafter are by all means to beware of making ourselves unlike God, by too much self-denial and humility. I am not ignorant that some may distinguish between ἐξουσία and δυνάμις, between a *lawful authority* and *actual power*; and affirm, that God's image consists only in the former; which
wicked

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wicked princes, such as *Saul* and *Nimrod*, have not, though they possess the latter. But to this I answer,

1. That the scripture neither makes nor owns such a distinction; nor any-where asserts, that when princes begin to be wicked, they cease of right to be governors. Add to this, that when God renewed this charter of man's sovereignty over the creatures to *Noah* and his family, we find no exception at all, but that *Cham* stood as fully invested with this right as any of his brethren.

2. But secondly; this favours of something ranker than Socinianism, even the tenets of the fifth monarchy, and of sovereignty founded only upon saintship; and therefore fitter to be answered by the judge, than by the divine; and to receive its confutation at the bar of justice, than from the pulpit.

Having now made our way through this false opinion, we are in the next place to lay down *positively* what this image of God in man is. It is, in short, *That universal rectitude of all the faculties of the soul, by which they stand apt and disposed to their respective offices and operations*: Which will be more fully set forth, by taking a distinct survey of it, in the several faculties belonging to the soul.

I. In the understanding.

II. In the will.

III. In the passions or affections.

I. And first for its noblest faculty, the understanding : It was then sublime, clear, and aspiring, and, as it were, the soul's upper region, lofty and serene, free from the vapours and disturbances of the inferior affections. It was the leading, controlling faculty ; all the passions wore the colours of reason ; it was not consul, but dictator. Discourse was then almost as quick as intuition ; it was nimble in proposing, firm in concluding ; it could sooner determine than now it can dispute. Like the sun, it had both light and agility ; it knew no rest, but in motion ; no quiet, but in activity. It did not so properly apprehend, as irradiate the object ; not so much find, as make things intelligible. It did arbitrate upon the several reports of sense, and all the varieties of imagination ; not like a drowsy judge, only hearing, but also directing their verdict. In sum, it was vegete, quick, and lively ; open as the day, untainted as the morning, full of the innocence and sprightliness of youth ; it gave the soul a bright and a full view into all things ; and was not only a window, but itself the prospect. Briefly, there is as much difference between the clear representations of the understanding

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then, and the obscure discoveries that it makes now, as there is between the prospect of a casement, and of a key-hole.

Now, as there are two great functions of the soul, *contemplation*, and *practice*, according to that general division of objects, some of which only entertain our speculation, others also employ our actions; so the understanding with relation to these, not because of any distinction in the faculty itself, is accordingly divided into *speculative* and *præctick*; in both of which the image of God was then apparent.

1. For the understanding speculative. There are some general maxims and notions in the mind of man, which are the rules of discourse, and the basis of all philosophy. As that *the same thing cannot at the same time be, and not be*. That *the whole is bigger than a part*. That *two dimensions severally equal to a third, must also be equal to one another*. Aristotle, indeed, affirms the mind to be at first a mere *rasa tabula*; and that these notions are not ingenite, and imprinted by the finger of Nature, but by the latter and more languid impressions of sense; being only the reports of observation, and the result of so many repeated experiments.

But

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But to this I answer two things.

(1.) That these notions are universal ; and what is universal must needs proceed from some universal, constant principle, the same in all particulars, which here can be nothing else but human Nature.

(2.) These cannot be infused by observation, because they are the rules by which men take their first apprehensions and observations of things, and therefore in order of Nature must needs precede them : As the being of the rule must be before its application to the thing directed by it. From whence it follows, that these were notions not descending from us, but born with us ; not our off-spring, but our brethren ; and (as I may so say) such as we were taught without the help of a teacher.

Now it was *Adam's* happiness in the state of innocence to have these clear and unsullied. He came into the world a philosopher, which sufficiently appeared by his writing the nature of things upon their names ; he could view essences in themselves, and read forms without the comment of their respective properties : He could see consequents yet dormant in their principles, and effects yet unborn, and in the womb of their causes ; his understanding could almost pierce into future contingents ; his conjectures improving even to prophecy, or the certainties

of prediction ; till his fall he was ignorant of nothing, but of sin ; or at least it rested in the notion, without the smart of the experiment. Could any difficulty have been proposed, the resolution would have been as early as the proposal ; it could not have had time to settle into doubt. Like a better *Archimedes*, the issue of all his inquiries was an *εὕρηκα*, an *εὕρηκα*, the off-spring of his brain without the sweat of his brow. Study was not then a duty, night-watchings were needless ; the light of reason wanted not the assistance of a candle. This is the doom of fallen man, to labour in the fire, to seek truth *in profundo*, to exhaust his time, and impair his health, and perhaps to spin out his days, and himself into one pitiful, controverted conclusion. There was then no poring, no struggling with memory, no straining for invention : His faculties were quick and expedite ; they answered without knocking, they were ready upon the first summons, there was freedom, and firmness in all their operations. I confess, 'tis as difficult for us, who date our ignorance from our first being, and were still bred up with the same infirmities about us, with which we were born, to raise our thoughts and imaginations, to those intellectual perfections that attended our Nature in the time of innocence ; as it is for a peasant bred up in
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the obscurities of a cottage, to fancy in his mind the unseen splendors of a court. But by rating positives by their privatives, and other arts of reason, by which discourse supplies the want of the reports of sense, we may collect the excellency of the understanding then, by the glorious remainders of it now, and guess at the stateliness of the building by the magnificence of its ruins. All those arts, rarities, and inventions which vulgar minds gaze at, the ingenious pursue, and all admire, are but the reliques of an intellect defaced with sin and time. We admire it now, only as antiquaries do a piece of old coin, for the stamp it once bore, and not for those vanishing lineaments and disappearing draughts that remain upon it at present. And certainly, that must needs have been very glorious, the decays of which are so admirable. He that is comely, when old and decrepit, surely was very beautiful, when he was young. An *Aristotle* was but the rubbish of an *Adam*, and *Athens* but the rudiments of paradise.

2. The image of God was no less resplendent in that, which we call man's practical understanding; namely, that store-house of the soul, in which are treasured up the rules of action, and the seeds of morality. Where, we must observe, that many who deny all connate no-

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tions in the speculative intellect, do yet admit them in this. Now of this sort are these maxims; *That God is to be worshipped. That parents are to be honoured. That a man's word is to be kept*, and the like; which, being of universal influence, as to the regulation of the behaviour, and converse of mankind, are the ground of all virtue and civility, and the foundation of Religion.

It was the privilege of *Adam* innocent, to have these notions also firm and untainted, to carry his monitor in his bosom, his law in his heart, and to have such a conscience, as might be its own casuist: And certainly those actions must needs be regular, where there is an identity between the rule and the faculty. His own mind taught him a due dependence upon God, and chalked out to him the just proportions and measures of behaviour to his fellow-creatures. He had no catechism but the creation, needed no study but reflexion, read no book, but the volume of the world, and that too, not for rules to work by, but for the objects to work upon. Reason was his tutor, and first principles his *magna moralia*. The decalogue of *Moses* was but a transcript, not an original. All the laws of nations, and wise decrees of states, the statutes of *Solon*, and the twelve tables, were but a paraphrase upon this standing rectitude

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tude of nature, this fruitful principle of justice, that was ready to run out, and inlarge itself into suitable demonstrations, upon all emergent objects, and occasions. Justice then was neither blind to discern, nor lame to execute. It was not subject to be imposed upon by a deluded fancy, nor yet to be bribed by a glozing appetite, for an *utile* or *jucundum* to turn the balance to a false or dishonest sentence. In all its directions of the inferior faculties, it conveyed its suggestions with clearness, and enjoined them with power; it had the passions in perfect subjection; and, though its command over them was but suasive and political, yet it had the force of absolute and despotical. It was not then, as it is now, where the conscience has only power to disapprove, and to protest against the exorbitances of the passions; and rather to wish, than make them otherwise. The voice of conscience now is low and weak, chastising the passions, as old *Eli* did his lustful domineering sons; *Not so, my sons, not so*: But the voice of conscience then, was not, *This should*, or *this ought to be done*; but *this must*, *this shall be done*. It spoke like a legislator; the thing spoke was a law: And the manner of speaking it a new obligation. In short, there was as great a disparity between the practical dictates of the understanding then, and now, as

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there is between empire and advice, counsel and command, between a companion and a governor.

And thus much for the image of God, as it shone in man's understanding.

II. Let us in the next place take a view of it, as it was stamped upon the will. It is much disputed by divines concerning the power of man's will to *good and evil* in the state of innocence; and upon very nice and dangerous precipices stand their determinations on either side. Some hold that God invested him with a *power to stand*, so that in the strength of that power received, he might without the auxiliaries of any farther influence have determined his will to a full choice of good. Others hold, that notwithstanding this power, yet it was impossible for him to exert it in any good action, without a superadded assistance of grace actually determining that power to the certain production of such an act. So that, whereas some distinguish between *sufficient* and *effectual* grace; they order the matter so, as to acknowledge none *sufficient*, but what is indeed *effectual*, and actually productive of a good action. I shall not presume to interpose dogmatically in a controversy, which I look never to see decided. But concerning the latter of these opinions, I shall only give these two remarks.

I. That

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1. That it seems contrary to the *common* and *natural conceptions* of all mankind, who acknowledge themselves *able* and *sufficient* to do many things, which actually they never do.

2. That to assert, that God looked upon *Adam's* fall as a sin, and punished it as such, when, without any antecedent sin of his, he withdrew that *actual grace* from him, upon the withdrawing of which, it was impossible for him *not to fall*, seems a thing that highly reproaches the essential Equity and Goodness of the Divine Nature.

Wherefore, doubtless the will of man in the state of innocence, had an intire freedom, a perfect equipendency and indifference to either part of the contradiction, *to stand*, or *not to stand*; *to accept*, or *not accept* the temptation. I will grant the will of man now to be as much a slave, as any one will have it, and be only *free to sin*; that is, instead of a liberty, to have only a licentiousness; yet certainly this is not nature, but chance. We were not born crooked; we learnt these windings and turnings of the serpent: And therefore it cannot but be a blasphemous piece of ingratitude to ascribe them to God; and to make the plague of our Nature the condition of our Creation.

The will was then ductile, and pliant to all the motions of right reason; it met the dictates
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of a clarified understanding half way. And the *active informations* of the intellect, filling the *passive reception* of the will, like *form* closing with *matter*, grew actuate into a third, and distinct perfection of practice : The understanding and will never disagreed ; for the proposals of the one never thwarted the inclinations of the other. Yet, neither did the will fervilely attend upon the understanding, but as a favourite does upon his prince, where the service is privilege, and preferment ; or as *Solomon's* servants waited upon him, it admired its wisdom, and heard its prudent dictates and counsels, both the direction, and the reward of its obedience. It is indeed the nature of this faculty to follow a superior guide, to be drawn by the intellect ; but then it was drawn as a triumphant chariot, which at the same time both *follows* and *triumphs* ; while it obeyed this, it commanded the other faculties. It was subordinate, not enslaved to the understanding : Not as a servant to a master, but as a queen to her king, who both acknowledges a subjection, and yet retains a majesty.

Pass we downward, from man's intellect and will,

III. To the passions, which have their residence and situation chiefly in the sensitive appetite. For we must know, that inasmuch as
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man is a compound, and mixture of flesh as well as spirit, the soul during its abode in the body, does all things by the mediation of these passions, and inferior affections. And here the opinion of the *Stoicks* was famous and singular, who look'd upon all these as sinful defects and irregularities, as so many deviations from right reason, making *passion* to be only another word for *perturbation*. Sorrow in their esteem was a sin scarce to be expiated by another ; *to pity*, was a fault ; *to rejoice*, an extravagance ; and the apostle's advice, *to be angry and sin not*, was a contradiction in their philosophy. But in this, they were constantly out-voted by other sects of philosophers, neither for fame, nor number less than themselves : So that all arguments brought against them from divinity would come in by way of overplus to their confutation. To us let this be sufficient, that our Saviour Christ, who took upon him all our *natural* infirmities, but none of our *sinful*, has been seen to *weep*, to be *sorrowful*, to *pity*, and to be *angry* : Which shews that there might be gall in a dove, passion without sin, fire without smoke, and motion without disturbance. For it is not bare agitation, but the sediment at the bottom, that troubles and defiles the water : And when we see it windy and dusty, the wind does not (as we use to say) *make*, but only *raise* a dust.

Now,

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Now, though the schools reduce all the passions to these two heads, the *concupiscible*, and the *irascible* appetite; yet, I shall not tie myself to an exact prosecution of them under this division; but at this time, leaving both their terms and their method to themselves, consider only the principal and most noted passions, from whence we may take an estimate of the rest.

And first, for the grand leading affection of all, which is *love*. This is the great instrument and engine of Nature, the bond and cement of society, the spring and spirit of the universe. Love is such an affection, as cannot so properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in that. It is the whole man wrapt up into one desire; all the powers, vigour and faculties of the soul abridged into one inclination. And it is of that active, restless nature, that it must of necessity exert itself; and, like the *fire*, to which it is so often compared, it is not a free agent, to chuse whether it will heat or no, but it streams forth by natural results, and unavoidable emanations. So that it will fasten upon an inferior, unsuitable object, rather than none at all. The soul may sooner leave off to subsist, than to love; and, like the vine, it withers and dies, if it has nothing to embrace. Now this affection in the
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state of innocence was happily pitched upon its right object; it flamed up in direct fervours of devotion to God, and in collateral emissions of charity to its neighbour. It was not then only another and more cleanly name for lust. It had none of those impure heats, that both represent and deserve hell. It was a vestal and a virgin fire, and differed as much from that, which usually passes by this name now-a-days, as the vital heat from *the burning* of a fever.

Then, for the contrary passion of *hatred*. This, we know, is the passion of defiance, and there is a kind of aversion and hostility included in its very essence and being. But then, (if there could have been hatred in the world, when there was scarce any thing odious) it would have acted within the compass of its proper object. Like aloes, bitter indeed, but wholesome. There would have been no rancour, no hatred of our brother: An innocent Nature could hate nothing that was innocent. In a word, so great is the commutation, that the soul then hated only that, which now only it loves, that is, sin.

And if we may bring *Anger* under this head, as being, according to some, a transient hatred, or at least very like it: This also, as unruly as now it is, yet then it vented itself by the mea-

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measures of reason. There was no such thing as the transports of malice, or the violences of revenge: No rendring evil for evil, when *evil* was truly a *non-entity*, and no-where to be found. Anger then was like the sword of justice, keen, but innocent and righteous: It did not act like fury, then call itself zeal. It always espoused God's honour, and never kindled upon any thing, but in order to a sacrifice. It sparkled like the coal upon the altar, with the fervours of piety, the heats of devotion, the sallies and *vibrations* of an harmless activity.

In the next place, for the lightsome passion of *joy*; it was not that, which now often usurps this name; that trivial, vanishing, superficial thing, that only gilds the apprehension, and plays upon the surface of the soul. It was not the mere crackling of thorns, or sudden blaze of the spirits, the exultation of a tickled fancy, or a pleased appetite. Joy was then a masculine and a severe thing; the recreation of the judgment, the jubilee of reason. It was the result of a real good, suitably applied. It commenced upon the solidities of truth, and the substance of fruition. It did not run out in voice, or undecent eruptions, but filled the soul, as God does the universe, silently and without noise. It was refreshing, but composed; like the pleasantness of youth tempered with

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with the gravity of age ; or the mirth of a festival managed with the silence of contemplation.

And, on the other side, for *sorrow* ; Had any loss or disaster made but room for grief, it would have moved according to the severe allowances of prudence, and the proportions of the provocation. It would not have sallied out into complaint or loudness, nor spread itself upon the face, and writ sad stories upon the forehead. No wringing of the hands, knocking the breast, or wishing one's self unborn ; all which are but the ceremonies of sorrow, the pomp and ostentation of an effeminate grief : Which speak not so much the greatness of the misery, as the smallness of the mind. Tears may spoil the eyes, but not wash away the affliction. Sighs may exhaust the man, but not eject the burthen. Sorrow then would have been as silent as thought, as severe as philosophy. It would have rested in inward senses, tacit dislikes : and the whole scene of it been transacted in sad and *silent* reflexions.

Then again for *Hope*. Though indeed the fulness and affluence of man's enjoyments in the state of innocence, might seem to leave no place for hope, in respect of any farther addition, but only of the prorogation, and future continuance of what already he possessed :

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fed : yet doubtless, God, who made no faculty, but also provided it with a proper object, upon which it might exercise and lay out itself, even in its greatest innocence, did then exercise man's hopes with the expectations of a better paradise, or a more intimate admission to himself. For it is not imaginable, that *Adam* could fix upon such poor, thin enjoyments, as riches, pleasure, and the gayeties of an animal life. Hope indeed was always the anchor of the soul, yet certainly, it was not to catch or fasten upon such mud. And if, as the apostle says, *no man hopes for that which he sees*, much less could *Adam* then hope for such things as he saw through.

And lastly, for the affection of *fear*. It was then the instrument of caution, not of anxiety; a guard, and not a torment to the breast that had it. It is now indeed an unhappiness, the disease of the soul : It flies from a shadow, and makes more dangers than it avoids : It weakens the judgment, and betrays the succours of reason : So hard is it to tremble, and not to err, and to hit the mark with a shaking hand. Then it fixed upon him who is only to be feared, God : and yet, with a filial fear, which at the same time both fears and loves. It was awe without amazement, dread without distraction. There was then a beauty even in
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this very paleness. It was the colour of devotion, giving a lustre to reverence, and a gloss to humility.

Thus did the passions then act without any of their present jars, combats, or repugnances; all moving with the beauty of uniformity, and the stillness of composure. Like a well-governed army, not for fighting, but for rank and order. I confess the scripture does not expressly attribute these several endowments to *Adam* in his first estate. But all that I have said, and much more, may be drawn out of that short aphorism, *God made man upright*, Eccl. vii. 29. And since the opposite weaknesses now infest the nature of man fallen, if we will be true to the rule of contraries, we must conclude, that those perfections were the lot of man innocent.

Now from this so exact and regular composure of the faculties, all moving in their due place, each striking in its proper time, there arose, by natural consequence, the crowning perfection of all, *a good conscience*. For, as in the body, when the principal parts, as the *heart* and *liver*, do their offices, and all the inferior, smaller vessels act orderly and duly, there arises a sweet enjoyment upon the whole, which we call *health*: So in the soul, when the supreme faculties of the will and understanding move regularly, the inferior passions and affections

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following, there arises a serenity and complacency upon the whole soul, infinitely beyond the greatest bodily pleasures, the highest quintessence and elixir of worldly delights. There is in this case a kind of fragrancy, and spiritual perfume upon the conscience ; much like what *Isaac* spoke of his son's garments ; *That the scent of them was like the smell of a field which the Lord had blessed.* Such a freshness and flavour is there upon the soul, when daily watered with the actions of a virtuous life. Whatsoever is pure, is also pleasant.

Having thus surveyed the image of God in the soul of man, we are not to omit now those characters of majesty that God imprinted upon the body. He drew some traces of his image upon this also ; as much as a spiritual substance could be pictured upon a corporeal. As for the sect of the *Anthropomorphites*, who from hence ascribe to God the figure of a man, *eyes, hands, feet*, and the like, they are too ridiculous to deserve a confutation. They would seem to draw this impiety from the *Letter* of the scripture, sometimes speaking of God in this manner. Absurdly ! as if the mercy of scripture-expressions ought to warrant the blasphemy of our opinions ; and not rather shew us, that God condescends to us, only to draw us to himself ; and cloaths himself in our likeness,

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ness, only to win us to his own. The practice of the *Papists* is much of the same nature, in their absurd and impious picturing of God Almighty : But the wonder in them is the less, since the image of a Deity may be a proper object for that, which is but the image of a Religion. But to the purpose: *Adam* was then no less glorious in his externals; he had a beautiful body, as well as an immortal soul. The whole compound was like a well-built temple, stately without, and sacred within. The elements were at perfect union and agreement in his body; and their contrary qualities served not for the dissolution of the compound, but the variety of the compofure. *Galen*, who had no more divinity than what his physick taught him, barely upon the consideration of this so exact frame of the body, challenges any one upon an hundred years study, to find how any the least fibre, or most minute particle might be more commodiously placed, either for the advantage of use or comeliness. His stature erect, and tending upwards to his centre; his countenance majestick and comely, with the lustre of a native beauty, that scorned the poor assistance of art, or the attempts of imitation; his body of so much quickness and agility, that it did not only contain, but also represent the soul : For we might well suppose,

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that where God did deposit so rich a jewel, he would suitably adorn the case. It was a fit work-house for sprightly, vivid faculties to exercise and exert themselves in. A fit tabernacle for an immortal soul, not only to dwell in, but to contemplate upon : where it might see the world without travel ; it being a lesser scheme of the creation, nature contracted, a little cosmography, or map of the universe. Neither was the body then subject to distempers, to die by piece-meal, and languish under coughs, catarrhs, or consumptions. *Adam* knew no disease, so long as temperance from the forbidden fruit secured them. Nature was his physician ; and innocence and abstinence would have kept him healthful to immortality.

Now the use of this point might be various, but at present it shall be only this ; to remind us of the irreparable loss that we sustained in our first parents, to shew us of how fair a portion *Adam* disinherited his whole posterity by one single prevarication. Take the picture of a man, in the greenness and vivacity of his youth, and in the latter date and declensions of his drooping years, and you will scarce know it to belong to the same person : There would be more art to discern, than at first to draw it. The same and greater is the difference between man innocent and fallen. He is, as
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it were, a new kind or species; the plague of sin has even altered his nature, and eaten into his very essentials. The image of God is wiped out, the creatures have shook off his yoke, renounced his sovereignty, and revolted from his dominion. Distempers and diseases have shattered the excellent frame of his body; and, by a new dispensation, *immortality is swallowed up of mortality*. The same disaster and decay also has invaded his spirituals: The passions rebel, every faculty would usurp and rule; and there are so many governors, that there can be no government. The light within us is become darkness; and the understanding, that should be eyes to the blind faculty of the will, is blind itself, and so brings all the inconveniences that attend a blind follower under the conduct of a blind guide. He that would have a clear, ocular demonstration of this, let him reflect upon that numerous litter of strange, senseless, absurd opinions, that crawl about the world, to the disgrace of reason, and the unanswerable reproach of a broken intellect.

The two great perfections, that both adorn, and exercise man's understanding, are *philosophy*, and *religion*: For the first of these; take it even amongst the professors of it, where it most flourished, and we shall find the very first notions of common sense debauched by

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them.

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them. For there have been such, as have asserted, *That there is no such thing in the world as motion: That contradictions may be true.* There has not been wanting one, that has denied *snow to be white.* Such a stupidity or wantonness had seized upon the most raised wits, that it might be doubted, whether the philosophers, or the owls of *Athens* were the quicker sighted. But then for Religion; What prodigious, monstrous, mis-shapen births has the reason of fallen man produced! It is now almost six thousand years, that far the greatest part of the world has had no other religion but idolatry: And idolatry certainly is the first-born of folly, the great and leading paradox; nay, the very abridgment and sum total of all absurdities. For is it not strange, that a rational man should worship an ox, nay, the image of an ox? That he should fawn upon his dog? Bow himself before a cat? Adore leeks and garlick, and shed penitential tears at the smell of a deified onion? Yet so did the *Egyptians*, once the famed masters of all arts and learning. And to go a little farther; we have yet a stranger instance in *Isa. xliv. 14.* *A man hews him down a tree in the wood, and part of it he burns, in ver. 16. and in ver. 17. with the residue thereof he maketh a God.* With one part he furnishes his chimney, with the other

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other his chapel. A strange thing, that the fire must first consume this part, and then burn incense to that. As if there was more divinity in one end of the stick, than in the other ; or, as if it could be graved and painted omnipotent, or the nails and the hammer could give it an *Apotheosis*. Briefly, so great is the change, so deplorable the degradation of our Nature, that, whereas before we bore the image of God, we now retain only the image of men.

In the last place, we learn from hence the excellency of christian Religion, in that it is the great and only means, that God has sanctified and designed to repair the breaches of humanity, to set fallen man upon his legs again, to clarify his reason, to rectify his will, and to compose and regulate his affections. The whole business of our redemption is, in short, only to rub over the defaced copy of the creation, to reprint God's image upon the soul, and (as it were) to set forth Nature in a second and fairer edition.

The recovery of which lost image, as it is God's pleasure to command, and our duty to endeavour, so it is in his power only to effect.

To whom be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

INTEREST DEPOSED,
AND

Truth Restored:

OR, A
WORD in SEASON.

Deliver'd in Two

SERMONS:

The first at St. Mary's in OXFORD, on
the 24th of July 1659, being the Time of
the *Affizes*: As also the *Fears* and *Groans*
of the Nation in the threaten'd and expected
Ruin of the *Laws*, *Ministry*, and *Universities*.

The other preached before the Honourable
Society of LINCOLN's-INN.

TO THE

Right Worshipful

EDWARD ATKINS,

Serjeant at Law, and formerly one of
the Justices of the *Common-Pleas*.

Honoured SIR,

THOUGH at first it was free, and in
my choice, whether or no I should publish
these discourses, yet the publication being
once resolved, the dedication was not so indiffe-
rent ; the nature of the subject, no less than the
obligations of the author, stiling them, in a pecu-
liar manner, yours : For since their drift is to
carry the most endangered and endangering truth,
above the safest, when sinful, interest ; as a
prælice upon grounds of reason the most generous,
and

and of christianity the most religious; to whom rather should this assertion repair as to a patron, than to him whom it has for an instance? Who, in a case of eminent competition, chose duty before interest; and when the judge grew inconsistent with the justice, preferred rather to be constant to sure principles, than to an unconstant government: And to retreat to an innocent and honourable privacy, than to sit and act iniquity by a law; and make your age and conscience, (the one venerable, the other sacred) drudges to the tyranny of fanatick, perjured usurpers.

The next attempt of this discourse is a defence of the ministry, and that, at such a time when none owned them upon the bench, (for then you had quitted it); but when, on the contrary, we lived to hear one in the very face of the university, (as it were in defiance of us and our profession) openly in his charge, defend the quakers and fanaticks, persons not fit to be named in such courts, but in an indictment. But, Sir, in the instructions I here presumed to give to others, concerning what they should do, you may take a narrative of what you have done: What respected their actions as a rule or admonition, applied to yours is only a rehearsal, whose zeal in asserting the ministerial cause is so generally known, so gratefully acknowledged, that I dare affirm, that,
in

in what I deliver, you read the words indeed of one, but the thanks of all. Which affectionate concernment of yours for them, seems to argue a spiritual sense, and experimental taste of their works, and that you have reaped as much from their labours, as others have done from their lands : For to me it seemed always strange, and next to impossible, that a man, converted by the word preached, should ever hate and persecute a preacher. And since you have several times in discourse declared yourself for that government in the church, which is founded upon scripture, reason, apostolical practice and antiquity, and (we are sure) the only one that can consist with the present government of state, I thought the latter discourse also might fitly address itself to you ; in the which you may read your judgment, as in the other your practice.

*And now, since it has pleased Providence, at length to turn our captivity, and answer persecuted patience with the unexpected returns of settlement ; to remove our rulers, and restore our ruler ; and not only to make our exactors righteousness, but, what is better, to give us righteousness instead of exaction, and hopes of religion to a church worried with reformation ; I believe, upon a due and impartial reflection on what is past, you now find no cause to repent, that you never dipt your
bands*

hands in the bloody high courts of justice, properly so called only by Antiphrasis ; nor ever prostituted the scarlet robe to those employments, in which you must have worn the colour of your sin in the badge of your office : But notwithstanding all the enticements of a prosperous villainy, abhorred the purchase, when the price was blood. So that now being privileged by an happy unconcernment in those legal murders, you may take a sweeter relish of your own innocence, by beholding the misery of others guilt, who being guilty before God, and infamous before men, obnoxious to both, begin to find the first-fruits of their sin in the universal scorn of all, their apparent danger, and unlikely remedy : Which beginnings being at length consummated by the hand of justice, the cry of blood and sacrilege will cease, mens doubts will be satisfied, and Providence absolved.

And thus, Sir, having presumed to honour my first essays in divinity, by prefixing to them a name, to which divines are so much obliged ; I should here in the close of this address, contribute a wish, at least, to your happiness : But since we desire it not yet in another world, and your enjoyments in this (according to the standard of a christian desire) are so complete, that they require no addition, I shall turn my wishes into gratulations ; and congratulating their fulness,
only

only wish their continuance: praying, that you may still possess what you possess; and do what you do; that is, reflect upon a clear, unblotted, acquitting conscience, and feed upon the ineffable comforts of the memorial of a conquered temptation; without the danger of returning to the trial. And this (Sir) I account the greatest felicity that you can enjoy, and therefore the greatest that he can desire, who is

Yours in all Observance,

Christ-Church
May 25. 1660.

Robert South.

S E R-

SERMON III.

Interest depofed, and Truth
reftored.

MATTH. X. 33.

*But whofoever fhall deny me before men,
him will I deny before my Father
which is in heaven.*

AS the great comprehensive gospel-duty is the denial of Self, fo the grand-gospel fin that confronts it, is the denial of Chrift. Thefe two are both the commanding and the dividing principles of all our actions: For whofoever acts in oppofition to one, does it always in behalf of the other. None ever oppofed Chrift, but it was to gratify Self: None ever renounced the intereft of Self, but from a prevailing love to the intereft of Chrift. The fubject I have
here

here pitched upon, may feem improper in thefe times, and in this place, where the number of profeflors, and of men, is the fame; where the caufe and intereft of Chrift has been fo cried up; and Chrift's perfonal reign and kingdom fo called for and expected. But fince it has been ftill preached up, but acted down; and dealt with, as the eagle in the fable did with the oifter, carrying it up on high, that by letting it fall he might dash it in pieces: I fay, fince Chrift muft reign, but his truths be made to ferve; I fuppofe it is but reafon to diftinguifh between profeflion and pretence, and to conclude, that mens prefent crying, *Hail, king,* and *bending the knee* to Chrift, are only in order to his future crucifixion.

For the difcovery of the fenfe of the words, I fhall inquire into their occafion. From the very beginning of the chapter we have Chrift confulting the propagation of the gofpel; and in order to it (being the only way that he knew to effect it) fending forth *a miniftry*; and giving them a commiffion, together with inftruction for the execution of it. He would have them fully acquainted with the nature and extent of their office; and fo he joins commiffion with inftruction; by one he conveys power, by the other knowledge. Suppofing (I conceive) that upon fuch an undertaking, the

the more *learned* his ministers were, they would prove never the less * *faithful*. And thus having fitted them, and stript them of all manner of defence, v. 9. *He sends them forth amongst wolves* : A hard expedition, you will say, to go amongst wolves ; but yet much harder to convert them into sheep ; and no less hard even to discern some of them, possibly being under sheeps cloathing ; and so by the advantage of that dress, sooner felt than discovered : Probably also such, as had both the properties of wolves, that is, they could whine and howl, as well as bite and devour. But, that they might not go altogether naked among their enemies, the only armour that Christ allows them is prudence and innocence ; *Be ye wise as serpents, but harmless as doves*, v. 16. Weapons not at all offensive, yet most suitable to their warfare, whose greatest encounters were to be exhortations, and whose only conquest, escape. Innocence is the best caution, and we may unite the expression, to be *wise as a serpent*, is to be *harmless as a dove*. Innocence is like polish'd armour ; it adorns, and it defends.

* In the parliament 1653. it being put to the vote, whether they should support and encourage a *godly* and *learned* ministry, the latter word was rejected, and the vote passed for a *godly* and *faithful* ministry.

In füm, he tells them, that the oppofition they fhould meet with, was the greateft imaginable, from ver. 16. to 26. But in the enfuing verfes he promifes them an equal proportion of affiftance ; and, as if it were not an argument of force enough to out-weigh the fore-mentioned difcouragements, he cafts into the balance the promife of a reward to fuch as fhould execute, and of punifhment to fuch as fhould neglect, their commiffion : The reward in the former verfe, *Whofoever fhall confeß me before men, &c.* the punifhment in this, *But whofoever fhall deny, &c.* As if by way of pre-occupation, he fhould have faid, Well ; here you fee your commiffion ; this is your duty, thefe are your difcouragements : Never feek for fhifts and evafions from worldly afflictions ; this is your reward, if you perform it ; this is your doom, if you decline it.

As for the explication of the words, they are clear and eafy ; and their originals in the Greek are of fingle fignification, without any ambiguity ; and therefore I fhall not trouble you, by propofing how they run in this, or that edition ; or ftraining for an interpretation where there is no difficulty, or diftinction where there is no difference. The only expofition that I fhall give of them, will be, to compare them to other parallel fcriptures, and peculiarly to that

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that in *Mark viii. 38.* *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* These words are a comment upon my text.

1. What is here in the text called a *denying of Christ*, is there termed a *being ashamed of him*, that is, in those words the Cause is expressed, and here the Effect; for therefore we deny a thing, because we are ashamed of it. First *Peter* is ashamed of Christ, then he denies him.

2. What is here termed a denying of *Christ*, is there called a being ashamed of *Christ and his words*: Christ's truths are his second Self. And he that offers a contempt to a king's letters or edicts, virtually affronts the king; it strikes his words, but it rebounds upon his person.

3. What is here said, *before men*, is there phrased, *in this adulterous and sinful generation*. These words import the hindrance of the duty enjoined; which therefore is here purposely enforced with a *Non-obstante* to all opposition. The term *adulterous*, I conceive, may chiefly relate to the *Jews*, who being nationally espoused to God by covenant, every sin of theirs was, in a peculiar manner, *spiritual adultery*.

4. What is here said, *I will deny him before my Father*, is there expressed, *I will be ashamed of him before my Father and his holy Angels*; that is, when he shall come to judgment, when revenging justice shall come in pomp, attended with the glorious retinue of all the host of heaven. In short, the sentence pronounced declares the judgment, the solemnity of it the terrour.

From the words we may deduce these observations:

I. *We shall find strong motives and temptations from men, to draw us to a denial of Christ.*

II. *No terrors, or sollicitations from men, though never so great, can warrant or excuse such a denial.*

III. *To deny Christ's words, is to deny Christ.*

But since these observations are rather implied, than expressed in the words, I shall wave them, and instead of deducing a doctrine distinct from the words, prosecute the words themselves under this doctrinal paraphrase.

Whosoever shall deny, disown, or be ashamed of either the person, or truths of Jesus Christ, for any fear or favour of man, shall with shame be disowned, and eternally rejected by him at the dreadful judgment of the great day.

The

The discussion of this shall lie in these things.

I. To shew, how many ways Christ and his Truths may be denied ; and what is the denial here chiefly intended.

II. To shew, what are the causes that induce men to a denial of Christ and his truths.

III. To shew, how far a man may consult his safety in time of persecution, without denying Christ.

IV. To shew, what is imported in Christ's denying us before his Father in heaven.

V. To apply all to the present occasion.

But before I enter upon these, I must briefly premise this; that though the text and the doctrine run peremptory and absolute, *Whosoever denies Christ, shall assuredly be denied by him*; yet still there is a *tacit* condition in the words supposed, unless repentance intervene. For this and many other scriptures, though as to their formal terms they are absolute, yet as to their sense they are conditional. God in mercy has so framed, and temper'd his word, that we have, for the most part, a reserve of mercy wrapp'd up in a curse. And the very first judgment that was pronounced upon fallen man, was with the allay of a promise. Wheresoever we find a curse to the guilty expressed, in the same words mercy to the penitent is

still understood. This premised, I come now to discuss the first thing, *viz.* How many ways Christ and his Truths may be denied, &c. Here first in general I assert, that we may deny him in all those acts that are capable of being morally good or evil ; those are the proper scene in which we act our confessions or denials of him. Accordingly therefore all ways of denying Christ I shall comprise under these three.

1. We may deny him and his truths by an erroneous, heretical judgment. I know it is doubted whether a bare error in judgment can condemn : But since truths absolutely necessary to salvation, are so clearly revealed, that we cannot err in them, unless we be notoriously wanting to our selves ; herein the fault of the judgment is resolved into a precedent default in the will ; and so the case is put out of doubt. But here it may be replied, Are not truths of absolute and fundamental necessity, very disputable ; as the Deity of Christ, the Trinity of Persons ? If they are not in themselves disputable, why are they so much disputed ? Indeed, I believe, if we trace these disputes to their original cause, we shall find, that they never sprung from a reluctancy in reason to embrace them. For this reason it self dictates, as most rational, to assent to any thing, though seemingly contrary to reason, if it is revealed by God,

God, and we are certain of the revelation. These two supposed, these disputes must needs arise only from curiosity and singularity; and these are faults of a diseased will. But some will farther demand, in behalf of these men, whether such as assent to every word in scripture, (for so will those that deny the natural Deity of Christ and the Spirit) can be yet said in doctrinals to deny Christ? To this I answer, Since words abstracted from their proper sense and signification, lose the nature of words, and are only equivocally so called; inasmuch as the persons we speak of take them thus, and derive the letter from Christ, but the signification from themselves, they cannot be said properly to assent so much as to the words of the scripture. And so their case also is clear. But yet more fully to state the matter, how far a denial of Christ in belief and judgment is damnable: We will propose the question, whether those who hold the fundamentals of faith, may deny Christ damnably, in respect of those superstructures, and consequences that arise from them? I answer in brief, By fundamental truths are understood, (1.) Either such, without the belief of which we cannot be saved: Or, (2.) Such, the belief of which is sufficient to save: If the question be proposed of fundamentals in this latter

fenfe, it contains its own anfwer; for where a man believes thofe truths, the belief of which is fufficient to fave, there the difbelief or denial of their confequences cannot damn. But what, and how many thefe fundamentals are, it will then be agreed on, when all fefts, opinions and perfuafions do unite and confent. 2^{dly}, If we fpeak of fundamentals in the former fenfe, as they are only truths, without which we cannot be faved: It is manifef that we may believe them, and yet be damned for denying their confequences: For that which is only a condition, without which we cannot be faved, is not therefore a caufe fufficient to fave: Much more is required to the latter, than to the former. I conclude therefore, that to deny Chrift in our judgment, will condemn, and this concerns the learned: Chrift demands the homage of your underftanding: He will have your *rea- fon* bend to him, you muft put your heads under his feet. And we know, that heretofore, he who had the leprofy in this part, was to be pronounced unclean. A poisoned reafon, an infected judgment, is Chrift's greateft enemy. And an error in the judgment, is like an impoftume in the head, which is always noifome, and frequently mortal.

2. We may deny Chrift verbally, and by oral expreffions. Now our words are the interpreters

preters of our hearts, the transcript of the judgment, with some farther addition of good or evil. He that interprets, usually enlarges. What our judgment whispers in secret, these proclaim upon the house-top. To deny Christ in the former, imports enmity ; but in these, open defiance. Christ's passion is renewed in both : He that misjudges of him, condemns him ; but he that blasphemes him, spits in his face. Thus the *Jews* and the *Pharisees* denied Christ. *We know that this man is a sinner*, John ix. 24. *And a deceiver*, Mat. xxvii. 63. *And he casts out devils by the prince of devils*, Mat. xii. 24. And thus Christ is daily denied, in many blasphemies printed and divulged, and many horrid opinions vented against the truth. The schools dispute whether in morals the external action superadds any thing of good or evil to the internal elicit act of the will : But certainly the enmity of our judgments is wrought up to an high pitch, before it rages in an open denial. And it is a sign that it is grown too big for the heart, when it seeks for vent in our words. Blasphemy uttered is error heighten'd with impudence : It is sin scorning a concealment, not only committed, but defended. He that denies Christ in his judgment, sins, but he that speaks his denial, vouches and owns his

his fin : And fo, by publifhing it, does what in him lies, to make it univerfal, and by writing it, to eftablifh it eternal. There is another way of denying Chrift with our mouths, which is negative : That is, when we do not acknowledge and confefs him : But of this I fhall have occafion to treat under the difcuffion of the third general head.

3. We may deny Chrift in our actions and practice ; and thefe fpeak much louder than our tongues. To have an orthodox belief, and a true profeflion, concurring with a bad life, is only to deny Chrift with a greater folemnity. Belief and profeflion will fpeak thee a christian but very faintly, when thy converfation proclaims thee an infidel. Many, while they have preached Chrift in their fermons, have read a lecture of atheifm in their practice. We have many here who fpeak of godlinefs, mortification, and felf-denial ; but, if thefe are fo, what means the bleating of the fheep, and the lowing of the oxen ; the noife of their ordinary fins, and the cry of their great ones ? If godly, why do they wallow and fteep in all the carnalities of the world, under pretence of christian liberty ? Why do they make religion ridiculous by pretending to prophecy, and when their prophecies prove delufions, why

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why do they * blaspheme? If such are self-deniers, what means the griping, the prejudice, the coverousness, and the pluralities preached against, and retained, and the arbitrary government of many? When such men preach of self-denial and humility, I cannot but think of *Seneca*, who praised poverty, and that very safely, in the midst of his riches and gardens; and even exhorted the world to throw away their gold, perhaps (as one well conjectures) that he might gather it up: So these desire men to be humble, that they may domineer without opposition. But it is an easy matter to commend patience, when there is no danger of any trial, to extol humility in the midst of honours, to *begin a fast after † dinner*. But, O! how Christ will deal with such persons, when he shall draw forth all their actions bare and stript from this deceiving veil of their

* A noted independent divine, when *Ol. Cromwell* was sick, of which sickness he died, declared that God had revealed to him, that he should recover and live 30 years longer, for that God had raised him up for a work which could not be done in less time. But *Oliver's* death being published two days after, the said divine publicly in prayer expostulated with God the defeat of his prophecy, in these words: *Lord, thou hast lied unto us; yea, thou hast lied unto us.*

† Very credibly reported to have been done in an independent congregation at *Oxon.*

heavenly

heavenly fpeeches ! He will then fay, It was not your fad countenance, nor your hypocritical groaning, by which you did either confefs or honour me : But your worldlinefs, your luxury, your finifter partial dealing : thefe have denied me, thefe have wounded me, thefe have gone to my heart ; thefe have caufed the weak to ftumble, and the prophane to blafpheme ; thefe have offended the one, and hardened the other. You have indeed fpoke me fair, you have faluted me with your lips, but even then you betray'd me. Depart from me therefore, you profefors of holinefs, but you workers of iniquity.

And thus having fhewn the three ways by which Chrift may be denied, it may now be demanded, Which is the denial here intended in the words ?

Answer. (1.) I conceive, if the words are taken as they were particularly and perfonally directed to the apoftles upon the occafion of their miffion to preach the gofpel, fo the denial of him was the not acknowledgment of the Deity or Godhead of Chrift ; and the reafon to prove, that this was then principally intended, is this ; Becaufe this was the truth in thofe days chiefly oppofed, and moft difbelieved ; as appears, becaufe Chrift and the apoftles did moft earneftly inculcate the belief of this,

this, and accepted men upon the bare acknowledgment of this, and baptism was administered to such as did but profess this, *Acts* viii. 37, 38. And indeed, as this one aphorism, *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, is virtually and eminently the whole gospel ; so, to confess or deny it, is virtually to embrace or reject the whole round and series of gospel truths. For he that acknowledges Christ to be the Son of God, by the same does consequentially acknowledge, that he is to be believed and obeyed, in whatsoever he does enjoin and deliver to the sons of men : And therefore, that we are to repent and believe, and rest upon him for salvation, and to deny our selves : And within the compass of this is included whatsoever is called *gospel*.

As for the manner of our denying the Deity of Christ here prohibited, I conceive, it was by words and oral expressions verbally to deny and dis-acknowledge it. This I ground upon these reasons :

1. Because it was such a denial as *was before men*, and therefore consisted in open profession ; for a denial in judgment and practice, as such, is not always before men.

2. Because it was such a denial or confession of him as would appear in preaching :

But

But this is managed in words and verbal profession.

But now, (2.) If we take the words, as they are a general precept equally relating to all times, and to all persons, though delivered only upon a particular occasion to the apostles, (as I suppose they are to be understood); so I think they comprehend all the three ways mentioned of confessing or denying Christ: But principally in respect of practice; and that,

1. Because by this he is most honoured or dishonoured.
2. Because without this the other two cannot save.
3. Because those who are ready enough to confess him both in judgment and profession, are for the most part very prone to deny him shamefully in their doings.

Pass we now to a second thing, *viz.* to shew,

II. What are the causes inducing men to deny Christ in his truths. I shall propose three.

1. The seeming supposed absurdity of many truths: Upon this foundation heresy always builds. The *heathens* derided the *christians*, that still they required and pressed *belief*; and well they might (say they) since the articles of their religion are so absurd, that upon principles of science they can never win assent. It is easy to draw it forth and demonstrate, how
upon

upon this score the chief hereticks, that now are said to trouble the church, do oppose and deny the most important truths in divinity. As, first, hear the denier of the Deity, and Satisfaction of Christ. What (says he) can the same person be God and Man? The Creature and the Creator? Can we ascribe such attributes to the same thing, whereof one implies a negation and a contradiction of the other? Can he be also finite and infinite, when to be finite is not to be infinite, and to be infinite not to be finite? And when we distinguish between the Person and the Nature, was not that distinction an invention of the Schools, favouring rather of metaphysicks, than divinity. If we say, that he must have been God, because he was to mediate between us and God, By the same reason, they will reply, we should need a mediator between us and Christ, who is equally God, equally offended. Then for his Satisfaction, they will demand, To whom this Satisfaction is paid? If to God, then God pays a price to himself: And what is it else to require and need no satisfaction, than for one to satisfy himself? Next comes in the denier of the Decrees and free Grace of God. What, (says he) shall we exhort, admonish, and intreat the saints to beware of falling away finally, and at the same time assert, that it is impossible
for

for them fo to fall? What, fhall we erect two contradictory wills in God, or place two contradictions in the fame will? And make the will of his purpofe and intention run counter to the will of his approbation? Hear another concerning the Scripture and Juftification. What, (fays the *Romanift*) rely in matters of faith upon a private Spirit? How do you know this is the fenfe of fuch a fcripture? Why, by the Spirit. But how will you try that Spirit to be of God? Why, by the Scripture: This he explodes as a circle, and fo derides it. Then for Juftification. How are you juftified by an imputed righteoufnefs? Is it yours before it is imputed, or not? If not, (as we muft fay) is this to be juftified to have that accounted yours, that is not yours? But again, Did you ever hear of any man made rich or wife by imputation? Why then righteous or juft? Now thefe feeming paradoxes, attending gofpel truths, caufe men of weak, prejudiced intellectuals to deny them, and in them, Chrift; being afhamed to own Faith fo much (as they think) to the difparagement of their Reafon.

2. The fecond thing caufing men to deny the truths of Chrift, is their unprofitablenefs. And no wonder, if here men forfake the truth, and assert intereft. To be *pious* is the way to be *poor*. Truth ftill gives its followers its own badge

badge and livery, a despised nakedness. It is hard to maintain the truth, but much harder to be maintained by it : Could it ever yet feed, cloath, or defend its assertors ? Did ever any man quench his thirst, or satisfy his hunger with a notion ? Did ever any one live upon propositions ? The testimony of *Brutus* concerning virtue, is the apprehension of most, concerning truth : That it is a name, but *lives* and *estates* are things, and therefore not to be thrown away upon words. That we are neither to worship or cringe to any thing under the Deity, is a truth too strict for a *Naaman* : He can be content to worship the true God, but then it must be in the house of *Rimmon* : The reason was implied in his condition, he was captain of the host, and therefore he thought it reason good to bow to *Rimmoti*, rather than endanger his place : Better bow than break. Indeed sometimes Providence casts things so, that truth and interest lie the same way : And, when it is wrapt up in this covering, men can be content to follow it, to press hard after it, but it is, as we pursue some beasts, only for their skins : Take off the covering, and though men obtain the truth, they would lament the loss of that : As *Jacob* wept and mourned over the torn coat, when *Joseph* was alive. It is incredible to consider how

interest out-weighs truth. If a thing in itself be doubtful, let it make for interest, and it shall be raised at least into probable ; and if a truth be certain, and thwart interest, it will quickly fetch it down to but a probability : Nay, if it does not carry with it an impregnable evidence, it will go near to debase it to a downright falsity. How much interest casts the balance in cases dubious, I could give sundry instances : Let one suffice : And that concerning the unlawfulness of usury. Most of the learned men in the world successively, both heathen and christian, do assert the taking of Use to be utterly unlawful ; yet the divines of the reformed church beyond the seas, though most severe and rigid in other things, do generally affirm it to be lawful. That the case is doubtful, and may be disputed with plausible arguments on either side, we may well grant : But what then is the reason, that makes these divines so unanimously concur in this opinion ? Indeed I shall not affirm this to be the reason, but it may seem so to many : That they receive their salaries by way of pension, in present ready money, and so have no other way to improve them ; so that it may be suspected, that the change of their salary, would be the strongest argument to change their opinion. The truth is, interest is the grand wheel and spring

spring that moves the whole universe. Let Christ and Truth say what they will, if interest will have it, gain must be godliness: If enthusiasm is in request, learning must be inconsistent with grace. If pay grows short, the university maintenance must be too great. Rather than *Pilate* will be counted *Cæsar's* enemy, he will pronounce Christ innocent one hour, and condemn him the next. How Christ is made to truckle under the world, and how his truths are denied and shuffled with for profit and pelf, the clearest proof would be by induction and example. But as it is the most clear, so here it would be the most unpleasing: Wherefore I shall pass this over, since the world is now so peccant upon this account, that I am afraid *instances* would be mistaken for *invectives*.

3. The third cause inducing men to deny Christ in his truths, is their apparent danger. To confess Christ, is the ready way to be cast out of the synagogue. The church is a place of graves, as well as of worship and profession. To be resolute in a good cause, is to bring upon ourselves the punishments due to a bad. Truth indeed is a possession of the highest value, and therefore it must needs expose the owner to much danger. Christ is sometimes pleased to make the profession of himself

costly, and a man cannot buy the truth, but he must pay down his life and his dearest blood for it. Christianity marks a man out for destruction; and Christ sometimes chalks out such a way to salvation, as shall verify his own saying, *He that will save his life shall lose it.* The first ages of the church had a more abundant experience of this: What *Paul* and the rest planted by their preaching, they watered with their blood. We know their usage was such, as Christ foretold, he sent them to wolves, and the common course then was *christianos ad leones*. For a man to give his name to christianity in those days, was to list himself a martyr, and to bid farewell, not only to the pleasures, but also to the hopes of this life. Neither was it a single death only that then attended this profession, but the terror and sharpness of it was redoubled in the manner and circumstance. They had persecutors, whose invention was as great as their cruelty. Wit and malice conspired to find out such tortures, such deaths, and those of such incredible anguish, that only the manner of dying was the punishment, death itself the deliverance. To be a martyr signifies only to witness the truth of Christ, but the witnessing of the truth was then so generally attended with this event, that *martyrdom* now signifies not only to witness, but

but to witness by death. The word, besides its own signification importing their practice. And since christians have been freed from heathens, christians themselves have turned persecutors. Since *Rome* from heathen was turned christian, it has improved its persecution into an inquisition. Now, when Christ and Truth are upon these terms, that men cannot confess him, but upon pain of death, the reason of their apostasy and denial is clear; men will be wise, and leave truth and misery to such as love it; they are resolved to be cunning, let others run the hazard of being sincere. If they must be good at so high a rate, they know they may be safe at a cheaper. *Si negare sufficiat, quis erit nocens?* If to deny Christ will save them, the truth shall never make them guilty. Let Christ and his flock lie open, and exposed to all weather of persecution, foxes will be sure to have holes. And, if it comes to this, that they must either renounce their religion, deny and blaspheme Christ, or forfeit their lives to the fire or the sword, it is but inverting *Job's* wife's advice, *Curse God, and live.*

III. We proceed now to the third thing, which is to shew, how far a man may consult his safety, &c.

This he may do two ways.

1. By withdrawing his person. Martyrdom is an heroick act of Faith. An atchievement beyond an ordinary pitch of it ; To you, says the *Spirit*, *it is given to suffer*. *Phil. i. 29*. It is a peculiar additional gift : It is a distinguishing excellency of degree, not an essential consequent of its nature. *Be ye harmless as doves*, says Christ, and it is as natural to them to take flight upon danger, as to be innocent : Let every man thoroughly consult the temper of his Faith, and weigh his courage with his fears, his weakness and his resolutions together, and take the measure of both, and see which preponderates ; and if his spirit faints, if his heart misgives and melts at the very thoughts of the fire, let him fly and secure his own soul, and Christ's honour. *Non negat Christum fugiendo, qui ideò fugit ne neget* : He does not deny Christ by flying, who therefore flies that he may not deny him. Nay, he does not so much decline, as rather change his martyrdom : He flies from the flame, but repairs to a desert ; to poverty and hunger in a wilderness. Whereas, if he would dispense with his conscience, and deny his Lord, or swallow down two or three contradictory oaths, he should neither fear the one, nor be forced to the other.

2. By

2. By concealing his judgment. A man sometimes is no more bound to speak, than to destroy himself; and as Nature abhors this, so Religion does not command that. In the times of the primitive church, when the christians dwelt amongst heathens, it is reported of a certain maid, how she came from her father's house, to one of the tribunals of the *Gentiles*, and declared herself a christian, spit in the judge's face, and so provoked him to cause her to be executed. But will any say, that this was to confess Christ, or die a martyr? He that, uncalled for, uncompelled, comes and proclaims a persecuted truth, for which he is surely to die, only dies a confessor to his own folly, and a sacrifice to his own rashness. Martyrdom is stamp'd such only by God's command; and he that ventures upon it without a call, must endure it without a reward: Christ will say, *Who required this at your hands?* His gospel does not dictate imprudence: No evangelical precept justles out that of a lawful self-preservation. He therefore, that thus throws himself upon the sword, runs to heaven before he is sent for; where though perhaps Christ may in mercy receive the man, yet he will be sure to disown the martyr.

And thus much concerning those lawful ways of securing ourselves in time of persecution:

Not, as if these were always : For sometimes a man is bound to confess Christ openly, though he dies for it ; and to conceal a truth, is to deny it. But now, to shew when it is our duty, and when unlawful to take these courses, by some general rule of a perpetual, never-failing truth, none ever would yet presume : For, as *Aristotle* says, *We are not to expect demonstration in ethicks, or politicks, nor to build certain rules upon the contingency of human actions* : So, inasmuch as our flying from persecution, our confessing, or concealing persecuted truths, vary and change their very nature, according to different circumstances of time, place, and persons, we cannot limit their directions within any one universal precept : You will say then, How shall we know when to confess, when to conceal a truth ? when to wait for, when to decline persecution ? Indeed, the only way that I think can be prescribed in this case, is to be earnest and importunate with God in prayer for special direction : And it is not to be imagin'd, that he, who is both faithful and merciful, will leave a sincere soul in the dark upon such an occasion. But this I shall add, That the ministers of God are not to evade, or take refuge in any of these two forementioned ways. They are publick persons ; and good shepherds must

must then chiefly stand close to the flock, when the wolf comes. For them to be silent in the cause of Christ, is to renounce it; and to fly, is to desert it. As for that place urged in favour of the contrary, in v. 23. *When they persecute you in this city, flee into another*, it proves nothing; for the *precept* was particular, and concerned only the *apostles*; and that, but for that time in which they were then sent to the *Jews*, at which time Christ kept them as a reserve for the future: For when after his death they were indifferently sent both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, we find not this clause in their commission, but they were to sign the truths they preached with their blood; as we know they actually did. And moreover, when Christ bids them, being persecuted in one city fly into another, it was not (as *Grotius* acutely observes) that they might lie hid, or be secure in that city, but that there they might preach the gospel: So that their flight here was not to secure their persons, but to continue their business. I conclude therefore, that faithful ministers are to stand and endure the brunt. A common soldier may fly, when it is the duty of him that holds the standard to die upon the place: And we have abundant encouragement so to do: Christ has seconded and sweeten'd his command with his promise: Yea, the thing
itself

itself is not only our duty, but our glory. And he, who has done this work, has in the very work partly received his wages. And, were it put to my choice, I think I should chuse rather, with spitting and scorn, to be tumbled into the dust in blood, bearing witness to any known truth of our dear Lord, now opposed by the enthusiasts of the present age, than by a denial of those truths through blood and perjury wade to a scepter, and lord it in a throne. And we need not doubt, but truth, however oppressed, will have some followers, and at length prevail. A Christ, though crucified, will arise: And as it is in the *Rev. xi. 3. The witnesses will prophesy, though it be in sackcloth.*

IV. Having thus dispatched the third thing, I proceed to the fourth, which is to shew, what it is for Christ to deny us before his Father in heaven. Hitherto we have treated of mens carriage to Christ in this world; now we will describe his carriage to them in the other. These words clearly relate to the last judgment; and they are a summary description of his proceeding with men at that day.

And here we will consider,

1. The action itself, *He will deny them.*
2. The circumstance of the action, *He will deny them before his Father, and the holy angels.*

I. Concerning the first: Christ's denying us is otherwise expressed in *Luke xiii. 27. I know you not.* To *know* in scripture language is to approve; and so, not to know, is to reject and condemn. Now, who knows, how many woes are crowded into this one sentence, *I will deny him*? It is (to say no more) a compendious expression of hell, an eternity of torments compressed in a word: It is condemnation itself, and, what is most of all, it is condemnation from the mouth of a Saviour. O! the inexpressible horror that will seize upon a poor sinner, when he stands arraigned at the bar of divine justice! When he shall look about and see his accuser, his Judge, the witnesses, all of them his remorseless adversaries; the law impleading mercy, and the gospel upbraiding him, the devil, his grand accuser, drawing his indictment; numbring his sins with the greatest exactness, and aggravating them with the cruellest bitterness; and conscience, like a thousand witnesses, attesting every article, flying in his face, and rending his very heart: And then after all, Christ, from whom only mercy could be expected, owning the accusation. It will be hell enough to hear the sentence; the very promulgation of the punishment will be part of the punishment, and anticipate the execution. If *Peter* was so abash'd when Christ gave him a
look

look after his denial ; if there was so much dread in his looks when he stood as prisoner, how much greater will it be when he sits as a judge ? If it was so fearful when he looked his denier into repentance, what will it be when he shall look him into destruction ? Believe it, when we shall hear an accusation from an Advocate, our eternal doom from our Intercessor, it will convince us that a denial of Christ is something more than a few transitory words : What trembling, what outcries, what astonishment will there be upon the pronouncing this sentence ! Every word will come upon the sinner like an arrow striking through his reins ; like thunder, that is heard, and consumes at the same instant. Yea, it will be a denial with scorn, with taunting exprobrations ; and to be miserable without commiseration, is the height of misery. He that falls below pity, can fall no lower. Could I give you a lively representation of guilt and horror on this hand, and paint out eternal wrath, and decypher eternal vengeance on the other, then might I shew you the condition of a sinner hearing himself denied by Christ : And for those, whom Christ has denied, it will be in vain to appeal to the Father, unless we can imagine that those, whom mercy has condemned, justice will absolve.

2. For the circumstance. *He will deny us before his Father, and the holy angels.* As much as God is more glorious than man, so much is it more glorious to be confessed before him, than before men : And so much glory as there is in being confessed, so much dishonour there is in being denied. If there could be any room for comfort after the sentence of damnation, it would be this, to be executed in secret, to perish unobserved. At it is some allay to the infamy of him who died ignominiously, to be buried privately. But when a man's folly must be spread open before the angels, and all his baseness ript up before those pure spirits, this will be a double hell : to be thrust into utter darkness, only to be punished by it, without the benefit of being concealed. When Christ shall compare himself, who was denied, and the thing for which he was denied, together, and parallel his merits with a lust, and lay eternity in the balance with a trifle, then the folly of the sinner's choice shall be the greatest sting of his destruction. For a man shall not have the advantage of his former ignorance and error, to approve his sin : Things that appeared amiable by the light of this world, will appear of a different odious hue in the clear discoveries of the next : As that which appears to be of this colour by a dim candle, will be found to be
of

of another, look'd upon in the day. So when Chrift fhall have clear'd up mens apprehenfions about the value of things; he will propofe that worthy prize for which he was denied: He will hold it up to open view, and call upon men and angels: Behold, look, here's the thing, here's that piece of dirt, that windy applaufe, that poor tranfitory pleasure, that contemptible danger, for which I was *difhonoured*, my truth difowned, and for which, life, eternity, and God himfelf was scorned and trampled upon by this finner: Judge all the world, whether what he fo defpifed in the other life, he deserves to enjoy in this? How will the condemned finner then crawl forth, and appear in his filth and fhame, before that undefiled tribunal, like a toad or a fnake in a king's prefence-chamber? Nothing fo irkfome, as to have one's folly difplay'd before the prudent: one's impurity before the pure. And all this, before that company furrrounding him, from which he is neither able to look off, nor yet to look upon. A difgrace put upon a man in company is unfupportable: It is heightened according to the greatnefs, and multiplied according to the number of the perfons that hear it. And now, as this circumftance [*before his Father*] fully fpeaks the *fhame*, fo likewise it fpeaks the *danger* of Chrift's then denying us.

For

Serm. 3. *and Truth restored.* 111

For when the accusation is heard, and the person stands convict, God is immediately lifting up his hand to inflict the eternal blow; and when Christ denies to exhibit a ransom to step between the stroke then coming, and the sinner, it must inevitably fall upon him, and sink his guilty soul into that deep and bottomless gulph of endless perdition. This therefore is the sum of Christ's denying us before his Father, *viz.* unsupportable shame, unavoidable destruction.

V. I proceed now to the uses which may be drawn from the truths delivered. And,

1. (Right honourable) not only the present occasion, but even the words themselves seem eminently to address an exhortation to your honours. As for others not to deny Christ, is openly to profess him; so for you who are invested with authority, not to deny him, is to defend him. Know therefore, that Christ does not only desire, but demand your defence, and that in a double respect;

(1.) In respect of his truth. (2.) Of his members.

(1.) He requires, that you should defend and confess him in his truth. Heresy is a tare sometimes not to be pulled up but by the civil magistrate. The words *liberty of conscience* is much abused for the defence of it, because not
well

well understood. Every man may have liberty of conscience to think and judge as he pleases, but not to vent what he pleases. The reason is, Because conscience bounding itself within the thoughts, is of private concernment, and the cognizance of these belong only to God: But when an opinion is published, it concerns all that hear it, and the publick being endamaged by it, it becomes punishable by the magistrate, to whom the care of the publick is intrusted. But there is one truth that concerns both ministry and magistracy, and all; which is opposed by those who affirm, that *none ought to govern upon the earth, but Christ in person*: Absurdly! as if the powers that are, destroyed his; as if a deputy were not consistent with a king; as if there were any opposition in subordination. They affirm also, that the wicked have no right to their estates; but only the *faithful*, that is, *themselves*, ought to *possess the earth*. And it is not to be questioned, but when they come to explain this principle, by putting it into execution, there will be but few that have estates at present, but will be either found, or made wicked. I shall not be so urgent, to press you to confess Christ, by asserting and owning the truth, contrary to this, since it does not only oppose truth, but property;

perty ; and here to deny Christ, would be to deny yourselves in a sense, which none is like to do.

(2.) Christ requires you to own and defend him in his members ; and amongst these, the chief of them, and such as most fall in your way, the *ministers* ; I say, that despised, abject, oppressed sort of men, the *ministers*, whom the world would make antichristian, and so deprive them of heaven ; and also strip them of that poor remainder of their maintenance, and so allow them no portion upon the earth. You may now spare that distinction of *scandalous ministers*, when it is even made *scandalous* to be a *minister*. And as for their discouragement in the courts of the law, I shall only note this, that for these many years last past, it has been the constant observation of all, that if a minister had a cause depending in the court, it was ten to one but it went against him. I cannot believe your law justles out the gospel ; but if it be thus used to undermine Christ in his servants, beware that such judgments passed upon them, do not fetch down God's judgments upon the land ; and that for such abuse of law, Christ does not in anger deprive both you and us of its use. (My Lords) I make no doubt, but you will meet with many suits in your course, in which the persons we speak of are concerned,

as it is easy to prognosticate from those many worthy petitions preferred against them, for which the *well-affected* * *petitioners* will one day receive but *small thanks* from the *court of heaven*. But however their causes speed in your tribunals, know that Christ himself will recognize them at a greater. And then, what a different face will be put upon things! When the usurping, devouring *Nimrods* of the world shall be cast with scorn on the left hand: And Christ himself in that great consistory shall deign to step down from his throne, and single out a poor despised minister, and (as it were taking him by the hand) present him to, and openly thus confess him before his Father: Father, here is a poor servant of mine, who, for doing his duty impartially, for keeping a good conscience, and testifying my truths in an hypocritical pretending age, was wrong'd, trod upon, stript of all: Father, I will, that there be now a distinction made, between such as have owned and confessed me with the loss of the world, and those that have denied, persecuted and insulted over me: It will be in vain then to come and creep for mercy: and say, Lord, when did we insult over thee?

* Whensoever any petition was put up to the parliament in the year 1653. for the taking away of tythes, the thanks of the house were still returned to them, and that by the name and elogy of the *well-affected petitioners*.

When

When did we see thee in our courts, and despised or oppressed thee? Christ's reply will be then quick and sharp: Verily, inasmuch as you did it to one of these little, poor, despised ones, ye did it unto me. The

2. Use is of information, to shew us the danger as well as the baseness of a dastardly spirit, in asserting the interest and truth of Christ. Since Christ has made a christian course a warfare, of all men living a coward is the most unfit to make a christian: Whose infamy is not so great, but it is sometimes less than his peril. A coward does not always escape with disgrace, but sometimes also he loses his life: Wherefore, let all such know, as can enlarge their consciences like hell, and call any sinful compliance, Submission, and stile a cowardly silence in Christ's cause, Discretion and Prudence: I say, let them know, that Christ will one day scorn them, and spit them, with their policy and prudence, into hell; and then let them consult, how politick they were, for a temporal emolument, to throw away eternity. The things which generally cause men to deny Christ, are, either the enjoyments, or the miseries of this life: But, alas! at the day of judgment all these will expire; and, as one well observes, what are we the better for pleasure, or the worse for sorrow, when it is past?

But then fin and guilt will be ftill fresh, and heaven and hell will be then yet to begin. If ever it was feafonable to preach courage in the defpifed, abufed caufe of Chrift, it is now, when his truths are reformed into nothing, when the hands and hearts of his faithful minifters are weakened, and even broke, and his *worship* extirpated in a mockery, that his *honour* may be advanced. Well, to eftablifh our hearts in duty, let us beforehand propofe to ourfelves the worft that can happen. Should God in his judgment fuffer *England* to be transformed into a *monfter*: Should the faithful be every where maffacred: Should the places of learning be demolifhed, and our colleges reduced (not only as * one in his zeal would have it) to *three*, but to *none*; yet, affuredly, hell is worfe than all this, and is the portion of fuch as deny Chrift: Wherefore, let our difcouragements be what they will, lofs of places, lofs of eftates, lofs of life and relations; yet ftill this fentence ftands ratified in the decrees of heaven, *Cursed be that man, that for any of thefe fhall defert the truth, and deny his Lord.*

* U. C. a colonel of the army, the perfidious caufe of *Penruddock's* death, and fome time after high-ſheriff of *Oxfordſhire*, openly and frequently affirmed the ufeleſſneſs of the *Universities*, and that *three colleges* were fufficient to answer the occasions of the nation, for the breeding of men up to learning, fo far as it was either neceſſary or uſeful.

*Ecclesiastical Policy the best Policy : Or,
Religion the best Reason of State :*

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Honourable SOCIETY

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SERMON IV.

Ecclesiastical Policy the best Policy, &c.

1 KINGS xiii. 33, 34.

After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places. Whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

JEROB O A M (from the name of a person become the character of impiety) is reported to posterity eminent, or rather infamous, for two things; usurpation of government, and innovation of religion. 'Tis

confessed, the former is expressly said to have been from God ; but since God may order, and dispose, what he does not approve ; and use the wickedness of men, while he forbids it ; the design of the first cause does not excuse the malignity of the second : And therefore, the advancement and sceptre of *Jeroboam* was in that sense only the work of God, in which it is said, *Amos* iii. 6. *That there is no evil in the city which the Lord hath not done.* But from his attempts upon the civil power, he proceeds to innovate God's worship ; and from the subjection of mens bodies and estates, to enslave their consciences, as knowing, that true religion is no friend to an unjust title. Such was afterwards the way of *Mahomet*, to the tyrant to join the impostor, and what he had got by the sword to confirm by the *Alcoran* : raising his empire upon two pillars, conquest, and inspiration. *Jeroboam* being thus advanced, and thinking *policy* the best *piety*, though indeed in nothing ever more befooled ; the nature of sin being not only to defile, but to infatuate. In the xith chapter, and the 27th verse, he thus argues ; *If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again unto Rehoboam*
king

king of Judah. As if he should have said : The true worship of God, and the converse of those that use it, dispose men to a considerate lawful subjection. And therefore I must take another course : My practice must not be better than my title ; what was won by force, must be continued by delusion. Thus sin is usually seconded with sin : And a man seldom commits one sin to please, but he commits another to defend himself. As 'tis frequent for the adulterer to commit murder to conceal the shame of his adultery. But let us see *Jeroboam's* politick procedure in the next verse. *Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem, behold thy gods, O Israel.* As if he had made such an edict : *I Jeroboam, by the advice of my council, considering the great distance of the temple, and the great charges that poor people are put to in going thither ; as also the intolerable burthen of paying the first-fruits and tythes to the priest, have considered of a way that may be more easy, and less burthensome to the people, as also more comfortable to the priests themselves ; and therefore strictly enjoin, that none henceforth presume to repair to the temple at Jerusalem, especially since God is not tied to any place or form of worship ; as also, because the devotion of*
men

men is apt to be clogged by such ceremonies ; therefore both for the ease of the people, as well as for the advancement of religion, we require and command, that all henceforth forbear going up to Jerusalem. Questionless these, and such other reasons the impostor used, to insinuate his devout idolatry. And thus the calves were set up, to which oxen must be sacrificed ; the God and the sacrifice out of the same herd. And because *Israel* was not to return to *Egypt*, *Egypt* was brought back to them : That is the *Egyptian* way of worship, the *Apis*, or *Serapis*, which was nothing but the image of a calf or ox, as is clear from most historians. Thus *Jeroboam* having procured his people *gods*, the next thing was to provide *priests*. Hereupon to the calves he adds a commission for the *approving*, *trying*, and *admitting* the rascality and lowest of the people to minister in that service : Such as kept cattle, with a little change of their office, were admitted to make oblations to them. And doubtless, besides the approbation of these, there was a commission also to *eject* such of the priests and levites of God, as being too ceremoniously addicted to the temple, would not serve *Jeroboam*, before God, nor worship his calves for their gold, nor approve those two glittering sins for any reason of state whatsoever. Having now perfected

fecting divine worship, and prepared both gods and priests ; in the next place, that he might the better teach his false priests the way of their new worship, he begins the service himself, and so countenances by his example, what he had enjoined by his command, in the 11th ver. of this chapter ; *And Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.* Burning of incense was then the ministerial office, amongst them, as preaching is now amongst us. So that to represent to you the nature of *Jeroboam's* action ; it was, as if in a christian nation the chief governour should authorize and encourage all the scum and refuse of the people to preach, and call them to the ministry by using to * preach, and invade the ministerial function himself. But *Jeroboam* rested not here, but while he was busy in his work, and a prophet immediately sent by God declares against his idolatry, he endeavours to seize upon and commit him ; in ver. 4. *He held forth his hand from the altar, and said, Lay hold of him.* Thus we have him compleating his sin, and by a *strange imposition of hands* persecuting the true prophets, as well as ordaining false. But it was a natural transition, and no ways wonderful to see him, who stood affronting God with

* *Cromwell* (a lively copy of *Jeroboam*) did so.

false incense in the right hand, persecuting with the left, and abetting the idolatry of one arm with the violence of the other. Now if we lay all these things together, and consider the parts, rise, and degrees of his sin, we shall find, that it was not for nothing, that the Spirit of God so frequently and bitterly in Scripture stigmatizes this person ; for it represents him, first inroaching upon the civil government, thence changing that of the church, debasing the office, that God had made sacred ; introducing a false way of worship, and destroying the true. And in this we have a full and fair description of a foul thing, that is, of an usurper, and an impostor : or, to use one word more comprehensive than both, of *Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.*

From the story and practice of *Jeroboam*, we might gather these observations :

I. *That God sometimes punishes a notorious sin, by suffering the sinner to fall into a worse.*

Thus God punished the rebellion of the *Israelites*, by permitting them to fall into idolatry.

II. *There is nothing so absurd, but may be obtruded upon the vulgar under pretence of religion.*

Certainly,

Certainly, otherwise a golden calf could never have been made, either the object, or the means of divine worship.

III. *Sin, especially that of perverting God's worship, as it leaves a guilt upon the soul, so it perpetuates a blot upon the name.*

Hence nothing so frequent, as for the Spirit of God to express wicked, irreligious kings, by comparing them to *Abab* or *Jeroboam*. It being usual to make the first and most eminent in any kind, not only the standard for comparison, but also the rule of expression.

But I shall insist only upon the words of the text, and what shall be drawn from thence. There are two things in the words that may seem to require explication.

1. *What is meant by the high places.*

2. *What, by the consecration of the priests.*

1. Concerning the high places. The use of these in the divine worship was general and ancient; and as *Dionysius Vossius* observes in his notes upon *Moses Maimonides*, the first way that was used, long before temples were either built, or thought lawful. The reason of this seems to be, because those places could not be thought to shut up, or confine the immensity of God, as they supposed an house did; and withal gave his worshippers a nearer approach

to

to heaven by their height. Hence we read that the *Samaritans* worshipped upon mount *Gerizim*, *John* iv. 20. And *Samuel* went up to the high place to sacrifice, *1 Sam.* ix. 14. And *Solomon* sacrificed at the high place in *Gibeon*, *1 Kings* iii. 1. Yea, the temple itself was at length built upon a mount or high place, *2 Chron.* iii. 1. You will say then, Why are these places condemned? I answer, That the use of them was not condemned, as absolutely and always unlawful in itself, but only after the temple was built, and that God had professed to put his name in that place, and no other: Therefore, what was lawful in the practice of *Samuel* and *Solomon* before the temple was in being, was now detestable in *Jeroboam*, since that was constituted by God the only place for his worship. To bring this consideration to the times of christianity: Because the apostles and primitive christians preached in houses, and had only private meetings in regard they were under persecution, and had no churches; this cannot warrant the practice of those now-a-days, nor a toleration of them, that prefer houses before churches, and a conventicle before the congregation.

2. For the second thing, which is the consecration of the priests; it seems to have been correspondent to ordination in the christian church.

church. Idolaters themselves were not so far gone, as to venture upon the priesthood without consecration and a call. To shew all the solemnities of this, would be tedious, and here unnecessary: The Hebrew word which we render *to consecrate*, signifies *to fill the hand*, which indeed imports the manner of consecration, which was done by filling the hand: for the priest cut a piece of the sacrifice, and put it into the hands of him that was to be consecrated; by which ceremony he received right to sacrifice, and so became a priest. As our ordination in the christian church is said to have been heretofore transacted by the bishop's delivering of the bible into the hands of him that was to be ordained, whereby he received power ministerially to dispense the mysteries contained in it, and so was made a presbyter. Thus much briefly concerning consecration.

There remains nothing else to be explained in the words: I shall therefore now draw forth the sense of them into these two propositions.

I. *The surest means to strengthen, or the readiest to ruin the civil power, is either to establish or destroy the worship of God in the right exercise of religion.*

II. *The next and most effectual way to destroy religion, is to embase the teachers and dispensers of it.*

Of both these in their order.

For the prosecution of the former we are to shew,

1. The truth of the assertion, that it is so.
2. The reason of the assertion, why and whence it is so.

1. For the truth of it : It is abundantly evinced from all records both of divine and prophane history, in which he that runs may read the ruin of the state in the destruction of the church ; and that not only portended by it, as its sign, but also inferred from it, as its cause.

2. For the reason of the point ; it may be drawn

(1.) From the judicial proceeding of God, the Great King of Kings, and Supreme Ruler of the Universe ; who, for his commands is indeed careful, but for his worship jealous : And therefore in states notoriously irreligious, by a secret and irresistible power, countermands their deepest project, splits their counsels, and smites their most refined policies with frustration and a curse ; being resolved that the kingdoms of the world shall fall down before him, either in his Adoration, or their own Confusion.

(2.) The reason of the doctrine may be drawn from the necessary dependance of the very principles

ciples of government upon religion. And this I shall pursue more fully. The great business of government is to procure obedience, and keep off disobedience : the great springs upon which those two move, are rewards and punishments, answering the two ruling affections of man's mind, hope and fear. For since there is a natural opposition between the judgment and the appetite, the former respecting what is *honest*, the latter what is *pleasing* ; which two qualifications seldom concur in the same thing, and since withal, man's design in every action is delight ; therefore to render things honest also practicable, they must be first represented desirable, which cannot be, but by proposing honesty cloathed with pleasure ; and since it presents no pleasure to the sense, it must be fetcht from the apprehension of a future reward : For questionless duty moves not so much upon command as promise. Now therefore, that which proposes the greatest and most suitable rewards to obedience, and the greatest terror and punishments to disobedience, doubtless is the most likely to enforce one, and prevent the other. But it is religion that does this, which to happiness and misery joins eternity. And these, supposing the immortality of the soul, which philosophy indeed conjectures, but only religion proves, or (which

is as good) persuades : I say these two things, eternal happiness and eternal misery, meeting with a persuasion that the soul is immortal, are without controversy, of all others, the first the most desirable, and the latter the most horrible to human apprehension. Were it not for these, civil government were not able to stand before the prevailing swing of corrupt nature, which would know no honesty but advantage, no duty but in pleasure, nor any law but its own will. Were not these frequently thunder'd into the understandings of men, the magistrate might enact, order, and proclaim ; proclamations might be hung upon walls and posts, and there they might hang, seen and despised, more like malefactors, than laws : But when religion binds them upon the conscience, conscience will either persuade or terrify men into their practice. For put the case, a man knew, and that upon sure grounds, that he might do an advantageous murder or robbery, and not be discovered ; what human laws could hinder him, which, he knows, cannot inflict any penalty, where he can make no discovery ? But religion assures him, that no sin, though concealed from human eyes, can either escape God's sight in this world, or his vengeance in the other. Put the case also, that men looked upon death without fear, in which sense it is
nothing

nothing, or at most very little; ceasing, while it is endured, and probably without pain, for it seizes upon the vitals, and benumbs the senses, and where there is no sense, there can be no pain. I say, if while a man is acting his will towards sin, he should also thus act his reason to despise death, where would be the terror of the magistrate, who can neither threaten or inflict any more? Hence an old malefactor in his execution, at the gallows made no other confession but this, that he had very jocundly pass'd over his life in such courses, and he that would not for fifty years pleasure endure half an hour's pain, deserved to die a worse death than himself. Questionless this man was not ignorant before, that there were such things as laws, assizes, and gallows; but had he considered and believed the terrors of another world, he might probably have found a fairer passage out of this. If there was not a minister in every parish, you would quickly find cause to increase the number of constables: And if the churches were not employed to be places to hear God's law, there would be need of them to be prisons for the breakers of the laws of men. Hence 'tis observable, that the tribe of *Levi* had not one place or portion together like the rest of the tribes: But because it was their office to dispense religion, they

were diffused over all the tribes, that they might be continually preaching to the rest their duty to God ; which is the most effectual way to dispose them to obedience to man : For he that truly fears God cannot despise the magistrate. Yea, so near is the connexion between the civil state, and religious, that heretofore, if you look upon well regulated, civilized heathen nations, you will find the Government and the Priesthood united in the same person : *Anius, rex idem hominum, Phœbique sacerdos.* *Æn.* 3. ver. 80. If under the true worship of God : Melchisedech *king of Salem, and priest of the most high God,* Heb. vii. 1. And afterwards *Moses*, (whom as we acknowledge a pious, so *atheists* themselves will confess to have been a wise prince) he, when he took the *kingly government* upon himself, by his own choice, seconded by divine institution, vested the *priesthood* in his brother *Aaron*, both whose concernments were so coupled, that if nature had not, yet their religious, nay, their civil interests would have made them brothers. And it was once the design of the emperor of *Germany*, *Maximilian* the first, to have joined the popedom and the empire together, and to have got himself chosen pope, and by that means derived the papacy to succeeding emperors. Had he effected it, doubtless there would

Serm.4. *the best Policy.* ' 133

would not have been such scuffles between them and the bishop of *Rome* ; the civil interest of the state would not have been undermined by an adverse interest, managed by the specious and potent pretences of religion. And to see, even amongst us, how these two are united, how the former is upheld by the latter : The magistrate sometimes cannot do his own office dexterously, but by acting the minister : Hence it is, that judges of assizes find it necessary in their charges to use patheticall discourses of conscience ; and if it were not for the sway of this, they would often lose the best evidence in the world against malefactors, which is confession : For no man would confess and be hanged here, but to avoid being damned hereafter. Thus I have, in general, shewn the utter inability of the magistrate to attain the ends of government, without the aid of religion. But it may be here replied, that many are not at all moved with arguments drawn from hence, or with the happy or miserable state of the soul after death ; and therefore this avails little to procure obedience, and consequently to advance government. I answer by concession, That this is true of Epicures, Atheists, and some pretended Philosophers, who have stifled the notions of Deity, and the soul's immortality ; but the unprepossessed on the one hand, and the

well-disposed on the other, who, both together, make much the major part of the world, are very apt to be affected with a due fear of these things; and religion accommodating itself to the generality, though not to every particular temper, sufficiently secures government: Inasmuch as that stands or falls according to the behaviour of the multitude. And whatsoever conscience makes the generality obey, to that prudence will make the rest conform: Wherefore, having proved the dependence of government upon religion, I shall now demonstrate, that the safety of government depends upon the truth of religion. False religion is, in its nature, the greatest bane and destruction to government in the world. The reason is, because whatsoever is false, is also weak. *Ens* and *verum* in philosophy are the same; and so much as any religion has of falsity, it loses of strength and existence. Falsity gains authority only from ignorance, and therefore is in danger to be known; for from being false, the next immediate step is to be known to be such. And what prejudice this would be to the civil government, is apparent, if men should be awed into obedience, and affrighted from sin by rewards and punishments, proposed to them in such a religion, which afterwards should be detected, and found a mere falsity and cheat; for

for if one part be but found to be false, it will make the whole suspicious. And men will then not only cast off obedience to the civil magistrate, but they will do it with disdain and rage, that they have been deceived so long, and brought to do that out of conscience, which was imposed upon them out of design: For tho' men are often willingly deceived, yet still it must be under an opinion of being instructed. Though they love the deception, yet they mortally hate it under that appearance: Therefore it is no ways safe for a magistrate, who is to build his dominion upon the fears of men, to build those fears upon a false religion. 'Tis not to be doubted, but the absurdity of *Jeroboam's* calves made many *Israelites* turn subjects to *Rehoboam's* government, that they might be profelytes to his religion. Herein the weakness of the *Turkish* religion appears, that it urges obedience upon the promise of such absurd rewards, as that, after death, they should have palaces, gardens, beautiful women, with all the luxury that could be: As if those things, that were the occasions and incentives of sin in this world, could be the rewards of holiness in the other: Besides many other inventions, false and absurd, that are like so many chinks and holes to discover the rottenness of the whole fabrick, when God shall be pleased to give

light to discover and open their reasons to discern them. But you will say, What government more sure and absolute than the *Turkish*, and yet what religion more false? Therefore certainly government may stand sure and strong, be the religion professed never so absurd. I answer, that it may be so by accident, through the strange peculiar temper, and gross ignorance of a people, as we see it happens in the *Turks*, the best part of whose policy, supposing the absurdity of their religion, is this, that they prohibit schools of learning; for this hinders knowledge and disputes, which such a religion would not bear. But suppose we, that the learning of these western nations were as great there, as here, and the *Alcoran* as common to them as the *Bible* to us, that they might have free recourse to search and examine the flaws and follies of it, and withal, that they were of as inquisitive a temper as we: And who knows, but as there are vicissitudes in the government, so there may happen the same also in the temper of a nation? If this should come to pass, where would be their religion? And then let every one judge, whether the *arcana imperii* and *religionis* would not fall together? They have begun to totter already; for *Mahomet* having promised to come and visit his followers, and translate them to paradise, after a thousand years, this being expired,

pired, many of the *Persians* began to doubt and smell the cheat, till the *musti*, or chief priest, told them, that it was a mistake in the figure, and assured them, that upon more diligent survey of the records, he found it two thousand, instead of one. When this is expired, perhaps they will not be able to renew the fallacy. I say therefore, that though this government continues firm in the exercise of a false religion, yet this is by accident, through the present genius of the people, which may change: But this does not prove, but that the nature of such a religion (of which we only now speak) tends to subvert and betray the civil power. Hence *Machiavel* himself, in his animadversions upon *Livy*, makes it appear, that the weakness of *Italy*, which was once so strong, was caused by the corrupt practices of the papacy, in depraving and misusing religion to that purpose, which he, though himself a papist, says, could not have happened, had the christian religion been kept in its first and native simplicity. Thus much may suffice for the clearing of the first proposition,

The inferences from hence are two.

I. If government depends upon religion, then this shews the pestilential design of those that attempt to disjoin the civil and ecclesiastical interest, setting the latter wholly out of the tuition

tuition of the former. But 'tis clear, that the fanaticks know no other step to the magistracy, but through the ruin of the ministry. There is a great analogy between the body natural and politick; in which the ecclesiastical or spiritual part justly supplies the part of the soul, and the violent separation of this from the other, does as certainly infer death and dissolution, as the disjunction of the body and the soul in the natural; for when this once departs, it leaves the body of the commonwealth a carcass, noisome, and exposed to be devoured by birds of prey. The ministry will be one day found, according to Christ's word, *the salt of the earth*, the only thing that keeps societies of men from stench and corruption. These two interests are of that nature, that 'tis to be feared they cannot be divided, but they will also prove opposite; and not resting in a bare diversity, quickly rise into a contrariety. These two are to the state, what the elements of fire and water to the body, which united, compose, separated, destroy it. I am not of the papists opinion, who would make the spiritual above the civil state in power as well as dignity, but rather subject it to the civil; yet thus much I dare affirm, that the civil, which is superior, is upheld and kept up in being by the ecclesiastical and inferior; as it is in a building, where
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the upper part is supported by the lower; the church resembling the foundation, which indeed is the lowest part, but the most considerable. The magistracy cannot so much protect the ministry, but the ministers may do more in serving the magistrate. A taste of which truth you may take from the holy war, to which how fast and eagerly did men go, when the priest persuaded them, that whosoever died in that expedition, was a martyr? Those that will not be convinced what a help this is to the magistracy, would find how considerable it is, if they should chance to clash; this would certainly eat out the other. For the magistrate cannot urge obedience upon such potent grounds, as the minister, if so disposed, can urge disobedience. As for instance, if my governor should command me to do a thing, or I must die, or forfeit my estate; and the minister steps in, and tells me, that I offend God, and ruin my soul, if I obey that command, 'tis easy to see a greater force in this persuasion from the advantage of its ground. And if divines once begin *to curse Meroz*, we shall see that *Levi* can use the sword as well as *Simeon*; and although ministers do not handle, yet they can employ it. This shews the imprudence, as well as the danger of the civil magistrate's exasperating those that can fire mens consciences
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against him, and arm his enemies with religion. For I have read heretofore of some, that having conceived an irreconcilable hatred of the civil magistrate, prevailed with men so far, that they went to resist him even out of conscience, and a full persuasion and dread upon their spirits, that, not to do it, * *were to desert God*, and consequently *to incur damnation*. Now when mens rage is both heightened and sanctified by conscience, the war will be fierce; for what is done out of conscience, is done with the utmost activity. And then *Campanella's* speech to the king of *Spain* will be found true, *religio semper vicit, præsertim armata*: Which sentence deserves seriously to be considered by all governors, and timely to be understood, lest it comes to be felt.

2. If the safety of government is founded upon the truth of religion, then this shews the danger of any thing that may make even the true religion suspected to be false. To be false, and to be thought false, is all one in respect of men, who act not according to truth, but apprehension. As on the contrary, a false religion, while apprehended true, has the force and efficacy of truth. Now there is nothing more apt to induce men to a suspicion of any religion, than frequent innovation and change:

* See Serm. 12.

For since the object of religion, God; the subject of it, the soul of man; and the business of it, truth, is always one and the same; variety and novelty is a just presumption of falsity. It argues sickness and distemper in the mind, as well as in the body, when a man is continually turning and tossing from one side to the other. The wise *Romans* ever dreaded the least innovation in religion: Hence we find the advice of *Mæcenas* to *Augustus Cæsar*, in *Dion Cassius*, in the 52^d book, where he counsels him to detest and persecute all innovators of divine worship, not only as contemners of the gods, but as the most pernicious disturbers of the state: For when men venture to make changes in things sacred, it argues great boldness with God, and this naturally imports little belief of him; which if the people once perceive, they will take their creed also, not from the magistrate's laws, but his example. Hence in *England*, where religion has been still *purifying*, and hereupon almost always in the *fire* and the *furnace*; atheists and irreligious persons have took no small advantage from our changes. For in king *Edward* the sixth's time, the divine worship was twice altered in two new liturgies. In the first of queen *Mary*, the protestant religion was persecuted with fire and faggot, by law and publick counsel of the same persons,

persons who had so lately established it. Upon the coming in of queen *Elizabeth*, religion was changed again, and within a few days the publick council of the nation made it death for a priest to convert any man to that religion, which before with so much eagerness of zeal had been restored. So that is observed by an author, that in the space of twelve years, there were four changes about religion made in *England*, and that by the publick council and authority of the realm; which were more than were made by any christian state throughout the world, so soon one after another, in the space of fifteen hundred years before. Hence it is, that the enemies of God take occasion to blaspheme, and call our religion *Statism*. And now adding to the former, those many changes that have happened since, I am afraid we shall not so easily claw off that name; nor, though we may satisfy our own consciences in what we profess, be able to repel and clear off the objections of the rational world about us, which not being interested in our changes as we are, will not judge of them as we judge; but debate them by impartial reason, by the nature of the thing, the general practice of the church; against which *new lights*, *sudden impulses of the Spirit*, *extraordinary Calls*, will be but weak arguments to prove any thing but the madness of those

those that use them, and that the church must needs wither, being *blasted* with such *inspirations*. We see therefore how fatal and ridiculous innovations in the church are: And indeed when changes are so frequent, it is not properly religion, but fashion. This, I think, we may build upon as a sure ground, that where there is continual change, there is great shew of uncertainty, and uncertainty in religion is a shrewd motive, if not to deny, yet to doubt of its truth.

Thus much for the first doctrine. I proceed now to the second, *viz. That the next, and most effectual way to destroy religion, is to embase the teachers and dispensers of it.* In the handling of this I shall shew,

1. How the dispensers of religion, the ministers of the word, are embased or rendered vile.

2. How the embasing or vilifying them is a means to destroy religion.

1. For the first of these, the ministers and dispensers of the word are rendered base or vile two ways;

(1.) By divesting them of all temporal privileges and advantages, as inconsistent with their calling. It is strange, since the priest's office heretofore was always splendid, and almost regal, that it is now looked upon as a piece of religion, to make it low and fordid. So that the use of
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the word *minister* is brought down to the literal signification of it, a *servant*: For now to *serve* and to *minister*, *servile* and *ministerial*, are terms equivalent. But in the old testament the same word signifies a *priest*, and a *prince*, or *chief ruler*: Hence, though we translate it *priest of On* (Gen. xli. 45.) and *priest of Midian* (Exod. iii. 1.) and *as it is with the people, so with the priest*, Isa. xxiv. 2. Junius and Tremellius render all these places, not by *sacerdos*, priest, but by *præsēs*, that is, a prince, or, at least, a chief counsellor, or minister of state. And it is strange, that the name should be the same, when the nature of the thing is so exceeding different. The like also may be observed in other languages, that the most illustrious titles are derived from things sacred, and belonging to the worship of God. Σεβαστὸς was the title of the christian *Cæsars*, correspondent to the Latin *Augustus*; and it is derived from the same word that σεβασμα, *cultus*, *res sacra*, or *sacrificium*. And it is usual in our language to make *sacred* an epithet to *majesty*; there was a certain royalty in things sacred. Hence the apostle, who, I think, was no enemy to the simplicity of the gospel, speaks of a *royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. which shews at least, that there is no contradiction or impiety in those terms. In old time, before the placing this office only in the

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the line of *Aaron*, the head of the family, and first-born offered sacrifice for the rest ; that is, was their priest. And we know, that such rule and dignity belonged at first to the masters of families, that they had *jus vitæ & necis*, jurisdiction and power of life and death in their own family ; and from hence was derived the beginning of kingly government, a king being only a civil head, or master of a politick family, the whole people ; so that we see the same was the foundation of the royal and sacerdotal dignity. As for the dignity of this office among the *Jews*, it is so pregnantly set forth in holy writ, that it is unquestionable. Kings and priests are still mentioned together, *Lam. ii. 6. The Lord hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king and the priest*, *Hos. v. 2. Hear, O priests, and give ear, O house of the king*, *Deut. xxvii. 12. And the man that doth presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest, that standeth there to minister before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die.* Hence *Paul*, together with a blow, received this reprehension, *Acts xxiii. 4. Revilest thou God's high-priest?* And *Paul* in the next verse does not defend himself, by pleading an extraordinary motion of the Spirit, or that he was sent to reform the church, and might therefore lawfully vilify the priesthood, and all sacred orders ; but in the

5th verse he makes an excuse, and that from ignorance, the only thing that could take away the fault; namely, *that he knew not that he was the high-priest*, and subjoins a reason which farther advances the truth here defended: *For it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.* To holy writ we might add the testimony of *Josephus*, of next authority to it in things concerning the *Jews*, who in sundry places of his history, sets forth the dignity of the priests; and in his second book against *Apion the grammarian*, has these words, *πάντων τῶν ἀμφοτέρωθεν δικάσαι οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐτάχθησαν*, the priests were constituted judges of all doubtful causes. Hence *Justin* also, in his 36th book, has this, *Semper apud Judæos mos fuit, ut eosdem reges & sacerdotes haberent.* Though this is false, that they were always so, yet it argues, that they were so frequently, and that the distance between them was not great. To the *Jews* we may join the *Egyptians*, the first masters of learning and philosophy. *Synesius*, in his 57th epist. having shewn the general practice of antiquity, *ὁ πάλαι χρόνος ἦνεκε τὰς αὐτὰς ἱεράς τε καὶ κείρας*, gives an instance in the *Jews* and *Ægyptians*, who for many ages *καὶ τῶν ἱερέων ἐβασίλευθησαν*, had no other kings but priests. Next, we may take a view of the practice of the *Romans*: *Numa Pompilius*,

lius, who civilized the fierce *Romans*, is reported, in the first book of *Livy*, sometimes to have performed the priest's office himself, *Tum sacerdotibus creandis animum adjecit, quanquam ipse plurima sacra obibat*; but when he made priests, he gave them a dignity almost the same with himself. And this honour continued together with the valour and prudence of that nation: For the success of the *Romans* did not extirpate their religion; the college of the priests being in many things exempted even from the jurisdiction of the Senate, afterwards the supreme power. Hence *Juvenal*, in his 2^d *sat.* mentions the priesthood of *Mars*, as one of the most honourable places in *Rome*. And *Julius Cæsar*, who was chosen priest in his private condition, thought it not below him to continue the same office when he was created absolute governor of *Rome*, under the name of perpetual dictator. Add to these the practice of the *Gauls* mentioned by *Cæsar*, in his 6th book *de bello Gallico*, where he says of the *druides*, who were their priests, that they did judge *de omnibus ferè controversiis publicis privatisque*. See also *Homer* in the first book of his *Iliad*, representing *Chryses* priest of *Apollo*, with his golden sceptre, as well as his golden censer. But why have I produced all these examples of the heathens? Is it to make these a

ground of our imitation? No, but to shew, that the giving honour to the priesthood, was a custom universal amongst all civilized nations. And whatsoever is universal, is also natural, as not being founded upon compact, or the particular humours of men, but flowing from the native results of reason: And that which is natural, neither does, nor can oppose religion. But you will say, this concerns not us, who have an express rule and word revealed. Christ was himself poor, and despised, and withal has instituted such a ministry. To the first part of this plea I answer, that Christ came to suffer, yet the sufferings and miseries of Christ do not oblige all christians to undertake the like. For the second, that the ministry of Christ was low, and despised, by his institution, I utterly deny. It was so, indeed, by the malice and persecution of the heathen princes; but what does this argue or infer for a low, dejected ministry in a flourishing state, which professes to encourage christianity? But to dash this cavil, read but the practice of christian emperors and kings all along, down from the time of *Constantine*, in what respect, what honour and splendor they treated the ministers; and then let our adversaries produce their puny, pitiful arguments for the contrary, against the general, clear, undoubted vogue and current of all antiquity.

tiquity. As for two or three little countries about us, the learned and impartial will not value their practice; in one of which places the minister has been seen, for mere want, to mend shoes on the *Saturday*, and been heard to preach on the *Sunday*. In the other place, stating the several orders of the citizens, they place their ministers after their apothecaries; that is, the physician of the soul after the druggist of the body: A fit practice for those, who, if they were to rank things as well as persons, would place their religion after their trade.

And thus much concerning the first way of debasing the ministers and ministry.

(2.) The second way is by admitting ignorant, fordid, illiterate persons to this function. This is to give the royal stamp to a piece of lead. I confess, God has no need of any man's parts or learning; but certainly then, he has much less need of his ignorance and ill-behaviour. It is a sad thing, when all other employments shall empty themselves into the ministry; when men shall repair to it, not for preferment, but refuge: Like malefactors flying to the altar, only to save their lives; or like those of *Eli's* race (1 *Sam.* ii. 36.) that should come crouching, and seek to be put in the priest's office, that they might eat a piece of bread. Heretofore there was required splendor

of parentage to recommend any one to the priesthood; as *Josephus* witnesses in a treatise which he wrote of his own life, where he says, to have right to deal in things sacred, was, amongst them, accounted an argument of a noble and illustrious descent. God would not accept the offals of other professions. Doubtless many rejected Christ upon this thought, that he was the *carpenter's* son, who would have embraced him, had they known him to have been the son of *David*. The preferring undeserving persons to this great service, was eminently *Jeroboam's* sin; and how *Jeroboam's* practice and offence has been continued amongst us in another guise, is not unknown: For has not learning unqualified men for approbation to the ministry? Have not parts and abilities been reputed enemies to grace, and qualities no ways ministerial? While *friends, faction, well-meaning, and little understanding*, have been accomplishments beyond study and the university; and to falsify a story of conversion, beyond pertinent answers and clear resolutions to the hardest and most concerning questions. So that matters have been brought to this pass, that if a man amongst his sons had any blind, or disfigured, he laid him aside for the ministry; and such an one was presently approved, as having a *mortified countenance*. In short, it

was

was a fiery furnace, which often approved dross, and rejected gold. But thanks be to God, those *spiritual wickednesses* are now discharged from *their high places*. Hence it was, that many rushed into the ministry, as being the only calling that they could profess without serving an apprenticeship. Hence also we had those that could preach sermons, but not defend them. The reason of which is clear, because the works and writings of learned men might be borrowed, but not the abilities. Had indeed the old levitical hierarchy still continued, in which it was part of the ministerial office to slay the sacrifices, to cleanse the vessels, to scour the flesh-forks, to sweep the temple, and carry the filth and rubbish to the brook *Kidron*, no persons living had been fitter for the ministry, and to serve in this nature at the altar. But since it is made a labour of the mind; as to inform mens judgments, and move their affections, to resolve difficult places of scripture, to decide and clear off controversies; I cannot see how to be a butcher, scavenger, or any other such trade, does at all qualify, or prepare men for this work. But as unfit as they were, yet to clear a way for such into the ministry, we have had almost all sermons full of gibes and scoffs at human learning. Away with *vain philosophy*, with the *disputer of this*
L 4 *world,*

world, and the enticing words of man's wisdom, and set up the foolishness of preaching, the simplicity of the gospel. Thus divinity has been brought in upon the ruins of humanity, by forcing the words of the scripture from the sense, and then haling them to the worst of drudgeries, to set a *jus divinum* upon ignorance and imperfection, and recommend natural weakness for supernatural grace. Hereupon the ignorant have took heart to venture upon this great calling, and instead of cutting their way to it, according to the usual course, through the knowledge of the *tongues*, the study of philosophy, school-divinity, the fathers and councils, they have taken another and shorter cut, and having read perhaps a treatise or two upon the heart, *The bruised reed*, *The crumbs of comfort*, *Wollebius in English*, and some other little authors, the usual furniture of old womens closets, they have set forth as accomplished divines, and forthwith they present themselves to the service; and there have not been wanting *Jeroboams* as willing to consecrate and receive them, as they to offer themselves. And this has been one of the most fatal, and almost irrecoverable blows that has been given to the ministry.

And this may suffice concerning the second way of embasing God's ministers; namely, by intrusting the ministry with raw, unlearned, ill-bred

bred persons; so that what *Solomon* speaks of a proverb in the mouth of a fool, the same may be said of the ministry vested in them, that it is like a *pearl in a swine's snout*.

2. I proceed now to the second thing proposed in the discussion of this doctrine, which is to shew, how the embasing of the ministers tends to the destruction of religion.

This is two ways.

(1.) Because it brings them under exceeding scorn and contempt; and then, let none think religion itself secure: For the vulgar have not such logical heads, as to be able to abstract such subtle conceptions as to separate the man from the minister, or to consider the same person under a double capacity, and so honour him as a divine, while they despise him as poor. But suppose they could, yet actions cannot distinguish as conceptions do; and therefore every act of contempt strikes at both, and unavoidably wounds the ministry through the sides of the minister. And we must know, that the least degree of contempt weakens religion, because it is absolutely contrary to the nature of it, religion properly consisting in a reverential esteem of things sacred. Now, that which in any measure weakens religion, will at length destroy it: For the weakening of a thing is only a partial destruction of it. Poverty and mean-
ness

ness of condition expose the wisest to scorn, it being natural for men to place their esteem rather upon things great than good ; and the poet observes, that this *infelix paupertas* has nothing in it more intolerable than this, that it renders men ridiculous; and then, how easy and natural it is for contempt to pass from the person to the office, from him that speaks, to the thing that he speaks of, experience proves; counsel being seldom valued so much for the truth of the thing, as the credit of him that gives it. Observe an excellent passage to this purpose, in *Ecclef.* ix. 14, 15. We have an account of a little city, with few men in it, besieged by a great and potent king ; and in the 15th verse we read, that *there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city.* A worthy service indeed, and certainly we may expect that some honourable recompence should follow it : A deliverer of his country, and that in such distress, could not but be advanced. But we find a contrary event in the next words of the same verse, *yet none remembred that same poor man.* Why, what should be the reason ? Was he not a man of parts and wisdom ? And is not wisdom honourable ? Yes, but *he was poor* : But was he not also successful, as well as wise ? True ; but still *he was poor* : And once grant this, and you cannot

cannot keep off that unavoidable sequel in the next verse, *The poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.* We may believe it upon *Solomon's* word, who was rich as well as wise, and therefore knew the force of both: and probably, had it not been for his riches, the queen of *Sheba* would not have come so far only to have heard his wisdom. Observe her behaviour when she came: Though upon the hearing of *Solomon's* wisdom, and the resolution of her hard questions, she expressed a just admiration; yet when *Solomon* afterwards shewed her his palace, his treasures, and the temple which he had built, 1 *Kings* x. 5. it is said, *there was no more spirit in her.* What was the cause of this? Certainly the magnificence, the pomp and splendor of such a structure. It struck her into an ecstasy beyond his wise answers. She esteemed this as much above his wisdom, as astonishment is above bare admiration: She admired his wisdom, but she adored his magnificence. So apt is the mind, even of wise persons, to be surprized with the superficialities or circumstances of things, and value or undervalue spirituals, according to the manner of their external appearance. When circumstances fail, the substance seldom long survives: Cloaths are no part of the body, yet take away cloaths, and the body will die. *Livy* observes

observes of *Romulus*, that being to give laws to his new *Romans*, he found no better way to procure an esteem and reverence to them, than by first procuring it to himself by splendor of habit and retinue, and other signs of royalty. And the wise *Numa*, his successor, took the same course to enforce his religious laws, namely, by giving the same pomp to the priest, who was to dispense them: *Sacerdotem creavit, insignique eum veste, & curuli regiam sellam adornavit*; that is, he adorned him with a rich robe, and a royal chair of state. And in our judicatures, take away the trumpet, the scarlet, the attendance, and the lordship, which would be to make justice naked, as well as blind, and the law would lose much of its terror, and consequently of its authority. Let the minister be abject and low, his interest inconsiderable, the word will suffer for his sake: The message will still find reception according to the dignity of the messenger. Imagine an ambassador presenting himself in a poor frize jerkin, and tattered cloaths, certainly he would have but small audience; his embassy would speed rather according to the weakness of him that brought, than the majesty of him that sent it. It will fare alike with the ambassadors of Christ; the people will give them audience according to their presence: A notable example of which we have in the behaviour of some to *Paul* himself, 1 *Cor.*

x. 10. Hence in the *Jewish* church it was cautiously provided in the law, that none that was *blind* or *lame*, or had any remarkable defect in his body, was capable of the priestly office; because these things naturally make a person contemned, and this presently reflects upon the function. This therefore is the first way by which the low, despised condition of the ministers tends to the destruction of the ministry and religion; namely, because it subjects their persons to scorn, and consequently their calling; and it is not imaginable that men will be brought to obey what they cannot esteem.

(2.) The second way by which it tends to the ruin of the ministry, is, because it discourages men of fit parts and abilities from undertaking it. And certain it is, that as the calling dignifies the man, so the man much more advances his calling; as a garment, though it warms the body, has a return with an advantage, being much more warmed by it. And how often a good cause may miscarry without a wise manager; and the *faith*, for want of a *defender*, is, or, at least, may be known. 'Tis not the truth of an assertion, but the skill of the disputant, that keeps off a baffle; not the justice of a cause, but the valour of the soldiers that must win the field. When a learned *Paul* was converted, and undertook the ministry, it stopped the mouths of those that said, None but poor,

poor, weak fisher-men preached christianity; and so his learning silenced the scandal, as well as strengthened the church. Religion, placed in a soul of exquisite knowledge and abilities, as in a castle, finds not only habitation, but defence. And what a learned * foreign divine said of the *English* preaching, may be said of all, *plus est in artifice quàm in arte*. So much of moment is there in the professors of any thing to depress or raise the profession. What is it that kept the church of *Rome* strong, athletick, and flourishing for so many *centuries*, but the happy succession of the choicest wits engaged to her service by suitable preferments? And what strength, do we think, would that give to the *true* religion, that is able thus to establish a *false*? Religion, in a great measure, stands or falls according to the abilities of those that assert it. And if, as some observe, mens *desires* are usually as large as their abilities, what course have we took to allure the former, that we might engage the latter to our *assistance*? But we have took all ways to affright and discourage *scholars* from looking towards this *sacred calling*: For will men lay out their *wit* and *judgment* upon that employment, for the undertaking of which both will be questioned? Would men, not long since, have spent toilsome days, and watchful nights, in the laborious *quest* of

* *Gaspar Stresò.*

knowledge preparative to this work, at length to come and dance attendance for approbation, upon a *junto* of petty tyrants, acted by party and prejudice, who denied fitness from learning, and grace from morality? Will a man exhaust his livelihood upon *books*, and his health, the best part of his life, upon *study*, to be at length thrust into a *poor village*, where he shall have his due precariously, and intreat for his own; and when he has it, live *poorly* and *contemptibly* upon it, while the same, or less labour, bestowed upon any other calling, would bring not only comfort, but splendor; not only maintenance, but abundance? 'Tis, I confess, the duty of ministers to endure this condition; but neither religion nor reason does oblige either them to approve, or others to chuse it. Doubtless, parents will not throw away the towardness of a *child*, and the expence of education, upon a profession, the labour of which is increased, and the rewards of which are vanished. To condemn promising, lively parts to contempt and penury in a despised *calling*, what is it else but the casting of a *Moses* into the mud, or offering a *son* upon the *altar*, and instead of a *priest* to make him a *sacrifice*? Neither let any here reply, that it becomes not a *ministerial spirit* to undertake such a *calling* for *reward*: For they must know, that it is one thing to *undertake* it for a *reward*, and not to be willing to undertake it without one. It is one thing

thing to perform *good works* only that we may receive the recompence of them in heaven, and another thing not to be willing to follow Christ and forsake the world, if there were no such recompence. But besides, suppose it were the duty of *scholars* to chuse this *calling* in the midst of all its *discouragements*; yet a prudent governor, who knows it to be his *wisdom* as well as his *duty*, to take the best course to advance religion, will not consider mens duty, but their practice; not what they ought to do, but what they use to do, and therefore draw over the best qualified to his *service*, by such ways as are most apt to persuade and induce men. *Solomon* built his temple with the *tallest cedars*: And surely when God refused the *defective*, and the *maimed* for *sacrifice*, we cannot think that he requires them for the *priesthood*. When *learning*, *abilities*, and what is excellent in the world, forsake the church, we may easily foretel its ruin, without the gift of prophecy. And when *ignorance* succeeds in the place of *learning*, *weakness* in the room of *judgment*, we may be sure *heresy* and *confusion* will quickly come in the room of religion: For undoubtedly there is no way so effectual to betray the truth, as to procure it a weak defender.

Well now, instead of making any particular uses from the point that has been delivered, let us make a brief recapitulation of the whole. Government, we see, depends upon religion,
and

and religion upon the encouragement of those that are to dispense and assert it. For the farther evidence of which truths, we need not travel beyond our own borders; but leave it to every one impartially to judge, whether from the very first day that our religion was unsettled, and church government flung out of doors, the civil government has ever been able to fix upon a sure foundation. We have been changing even to a proverb. The *indignation of heaven* has been rolling and turning us from one form to another, till at length such a giddiness seized upon the *government*, that it fell into the very dregs of *sectaries*, who threatned an equal ruin both to *minister* and *magistrate*; and how the state has sympathized with the church, is apparent: For have not our *princes* as well as our *priests* been of the lowest of the people? Have not *coblers*, *draymen*, *mechanicks*, governed, as well as *preached*? Nay, have not they, by *preaching*, come to govern? Was ever that of *Solomon* more verified, *that servants have rid, while princes and nobles have gone on foot*? But God has been pleased, by a *miracle* of mercy, to dissipate this confusion and chaos, and to give us some openings, some dawnings of *liberty* and *settlement*. But now, let not those who are to rebuild our *Jerusalem*, think that the *temple* must be built last: For if there be such a thing as a God

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and religion, as, whether men believe it or no, they will one day find and feel, assuredly he will stop our *liberty*, till we restore him his worship. Besides, it is a senseless thing in reason, to think that one of these interests can stand without the other, when in the very order of natural causes, government is preserved by religion. But to return to *Jeroboam*, with whom we first began. He laid the foundation of his government in destroying, though doubtless he coloured it with the name of reforming God's worship; but see the issue. Consider him cursed by God, maintaining his usurped title, by continual vexatious wars against the kings of *Judah*; smote in his posterity, which was made like the dung upon the face of the earth, as low and vile as those *priests* whom he had employed: Consider him branded, and made odious to all after-ages: And now, when his kingdom and glory was at an end, and he and his posterity rotting under ground, and his name stinking above it; judge what a worthy prize he made in getting of a kingdom, by destroying the church. Wherefore the sum of all is this; to advise and desire those whom it may concern, To consider *Jeroboam's* punishment, and then they will have little heart to *Jeroboam's* sin.

The Duties of the Episcopal Function:

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

LAMBETH-CHAPEL,

On the 25th of *November*, 1666.

UPON THE

CONSECRATION

Of the Right Rev^d Father in God

Dr. *JOHN DOLBEN*,

Lord Bishop of *ROCHESTER*.

To the Right Rev^d. Father in GOD

J O H N,

Lord Bishop of *Rochester*,

Dean of the CATHEDRAL CHURCH of
WESTMINSTER,
AND

Clerk of the Closet to his MAJESTY.

MY LORD,

THOUGH the interposal of my Lord of
Canterbury's command for the publication
of this mean discourse, may seem so far
to determine, as even to take away my choice;
yet I must own it to the world, that it is
solely and intirely my own inclination, se-
conded by my obligations to your Lordship,
that makes this, that was so lately an humble
attendant upon your Lordship's consecration,
now ambitious to consecrate itself with your
Lordship's name. It was my honour to have lived
in the same college with your Lordship, and
now to belong to the same cathedral, where at
pre-

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present you credit the Church as much by your government, as you did the School formerly by your wit. Your Lordship even then grew up into a constant superiority above others; and all your after-greatness seems but a paraphrase upon those promising beginnings: For whatsoever you are, or shall be, has been but an easy prognostick from what you were. It is your Lordship's unhappiness to be cast upon an age in which the church is in its wane; and if you do not those glorious things that our English prelates did two or three hundred years since, it is not because your Lordship is at all less than they, but because the times are worse. Witness those magnificent buildings in Christ-Church in Oxford, begun and carried on by your Lordship, when by your place you governed, and by your wisdom increased the treasure of that college; and which must eternally set your fame above the reach of envy and detraction, these great structures you attempted, at a time when you returned poor and bare, to a college as bare, after a long persecution, and before you had laid so much as one stone in the repairs of your own fortunes: By which incomparably high and generous undertaking, you have shewn the world how fit a person you were to build upon Wolsey's foundation; a prelate whose great designs you imitate, and whose mind you equal. Briefly, that Christ-Church stands so

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high above ground, and that the church of Westminster lies not flat upon it, is your Lordship's commendation. And therefore your Lordship is not behind-hand with the church, paying it as much credit and support as you receive from it; for you owe your promotion to your merit, and, I am sure, your merit to yourself. All men court you, not so much because a great person, as a publick good: For, as a friend, there is none so hearty, so nobly warm and active to make good all the offices of that endearing relation: As a patron, none more able to oblige and reward your dependents, and, which is the crowning ornament of power, none more willing. And lastly, as a diocesan, you are like even to out-do yourself in all other capacities, and, in a word, to exemplify and realize every word of the following discourse; which is here most humbly and gratefully presented to your Lordship, by

Your Lordship's

Most obliged Servant,

From St. James's,
Dec. 3. 1666.

Robert South.

S E R-

S E R M O N V.

The Duties of the Episcopal Function, &c.

T I T U S ii. ult.

These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

IT may possibly be expected, that the very taking of my text out of this epistle to *Titus*, may engage me in a discourse about the nature, original, and divine right of Episcopacy; and if it should, it were no more than what some of the greatest, and the learnedest persons in the world (when men served truth instead of design) had done before: For I must profess, that I cannot look upon *Titus* as so far *unbishoped* yet, but that he still exhibits to us all the essentials of that jurisdiction, which to this day is claimed for episcopal. We are

told in the fifth verse of the first chapter, *that he was left in Crete, to set things in order, and to ordain elders in every city*; which text, one would think, were sufficiently clear and full, and too big with evidence to be perverted: But when we have seen rebellion commented out of the thirteenth of the *Romans*, and since there are few things but admit of gloss and probability, and consequently may be expounded as well as disputed on both sides; it is no such wonder, that some would bear the world in hand, that the apostle's design and meaning is for Presbytery, though his words are all the time for Episcopacy: No wonder, I say, to us at least, who have conversed with too many strange unparallel'd actions, occurrences and events, now to wonder at any thing: Wonder is from surprize; and surprize ceases upon experience.

I am not so much a friend to the stale, starched formality of preambles, as to detain so great an audience with any previous discourse, extrinsick to the subject-matter and design of the text; and therefore I shall fall directly upon the words, which run in the form of an exhortation, though in appearance a very strange one; for the matter of an exhortation should be something naturally in the power of him to whom the exhortation is directed: For no man exhorts another to be strong, beautiful, witty,

or

or the like; these are the felicities of some conditions, the object of more wishes, but the effects of no man's choice. Nor seems there any greater reason for the apostle's exhorting *Titus*, that no man should despise him; for how could another man's action be his duty? Was it in his power that man should not be wicked and injurious? And if such persons would despise him, could any thing pass an obligation upon him not to be despised? No, this cannot be the meaning; and therefore it is clear, that the exhortation lies not against the action itself, which is only in the despiser's power, but against the just occasion of it, which is in the will and power of him that is despised. It was not in *Titus's* power that men should not despise him, but it was in his power to bereave them of all just cause of doing so; it was not in his power not to be derided, but it was in his power not to be ridiculous.

In all this epistle it is evident that *St. Paul* looks upon *Titus* as advanced to the dignity of a prime ruler of the church, and intrusted with a large diocese, containing many particular churches under the immediate government of their respective elders; and those deriving authority from his ordination, as was specified in the fifth verse of the first chapter: And now looking upon *Titus* under this qualification, he
addresses

addresses a long advice and instruction to him, for the discharge of so important a function, all along the first and second chapters; but sums up all in the last verse, which is the subject of the ensuing discourse, and contains in it these two things.

I. An account of the duties of his place or office.

II. Of the means to facilitate and make effectual their execution.

I. The duties of his place were two, 1. To *teach*. 2. To *rule*. Both comprised in these words; *These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority*.

And then the means, the only means to make him successful, bright and victorious in the performance of these great works, was to be above contempt, to shine, like the Baptist, with a clear and a triumphant light. In a word, it is every bishop's duty to *teach*, and to *govern*; and his way to do it, is, *not to be despised*.

We will discourse of each respectively in their order.

1. And first, for the first branch of the great work incumbent upon a church ruler, which is *to teach*: A work that none is too great or too high for. It is a work of charity, and charity is the work of heaven, which is always laying itself out upon the needy and the impotent;

Nay,

Nay, and it is a work of the highest and the noblest charity; for he that teacheth another, gives an alms to his soul: He cloaths the nakedness of his understanding, and relieves the wants of his impoverished reason. He indeed that governs well, leads the blind; but he that teaches, gives him eyes; and it is a glorious thing to have been the repairer of a decayed intellect, and a sub-worker to grace, in freeing it from some of the inconveniencies of original sin. It is a benefaction that gives a man a kind of prerogative; for even in the common dialect of the world every *teacher* is called a *master*. It is the property of instruction to descend, and upon that very account it supposes him that instructs, the superior, or at least makes him so.

To say a man is advanced too high to condescend to teach the ignorant, is as much as to say, that the sun is in too high a place to shine upon what is below it. The *Sun* is said to *rule the day*, and the *moon to rule the night*; but do they not rule them only by enlightening them? Doctrine is that which must prepare men for discipline; and men never go on so chearfully, as when they see where they go.

Nor is the dulness of the scholar to extinguish, but rather to inflame the charity of the teacher: For since it is not in men as in vessels, that the smallest capacity is the soonest filled, where
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the labour is doubled, the value of the work is enhanced ; for it is a sowing where a man never expects to reap any thing but the comfort and conscience of having done virtuously. And yet we know moreover, that God sometimes converts even the dull and the slow, turning *very stones* into *sons of Abraham* ; where, besides that the difficulty of the conquest advances the trophy of the conqueror, it often falls out, that the backward learner makes amends another way, recompensing *sure* for *sudden*, expiating his want of docility with a deeper and a more rooted retention ; which alone were argument sufficient to enforce the apostle's injunction of being *instant in season, and out of season*, even upon the highest and most exalted ruler in the church. He that sits in *Moses's* chair, sits there to instruct, as well as to rule : And a general's office engages him to lead, as well as to command his army. In the first of *Ecclesiastes*, *Solomon* represents himself both as *preacher* and *king of Israel* : And every soul that a bishop gains, is a new accession to the extent of his power ; he preaches his jurisdiction wider, and enlarges his spiritual diocese, as he enlarges mens apprehensions.

The teaching part indeed of a *Romish* bishop is easy enough, whose grand business is only to teach men to be ignorant, to instruct them how
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to know nothing, or, which is all one, to know upon trust, to believe implicitly; and, in a word, to see with other mens eyes, till they come to be lost in their own souls. But our religion is a religion that dares to be understood, that offers itself to the search of the inquisitive, to the inspection of the severest and the most awakened reason: For being secure of her substantial truth and purity, she knows, that for her to be seen and looked into, is to be embraced and admired. As there needs no greater argument for men to love the light than to see it, it needs no legends, no service in an unknown tongue, no inquisition against scripture, no purging out the heart and sense of authors, no altering or bribing the voice of antiquity to speak for it; it needs none of all these laborious artifices of ignorance; none of all these cloaks and coverings. The *Romish* faith indeed must be covered, or it cannot be kept warm: And their clergy deal with their religion, as with a great crime; if it is discovered, they are undone. But there is no bishop of the church of *England* but accounts it his interest, as well as his duty, to comply with this precept of the apostle *Paul* to *Titus*, *These things teach and exhort.*

Now this teaching may be effected two ways:

(1.) Im-

(1.) Immediately by himself.

(2.) Mediately by others.

And first, *immediately* by himself. Where God gives a talent, the episcopal robe can be no napkin to hide it in. Change of condition changes not the abilities of nature, but makes them more illustrious in their exercise ; and the episcopal dignity, added to a good preaching faculty, is like the erecting of a stately fountain upon a spring, which still, for all that, remains as much a spring as it was before, and flows as plentifully, only it flows with the circumstance of greater state and magnificence. Height of place is intended only to stamp the endowments of a private condition with lustre and authority: And thanks be to God, neither the church's professed enemies, nor her pretended friends, have any cause to asperse her in this respect, as having over her such bishops, as are able to silence the factious, no less by their preaching than by their authority.

But then, on the other hand, let me add also, that this is not so absolutely necessary as to be of the vital constitution of this function. He may teach his diocese, who ceases to be able to preach to it ; for he may do it by appointing teachers, and by a vigilant exacting from them the care and the instruction of their respective flocks.

flocks. He is the spiritual father of his diocese; and a father may see his children taught, though he himself does not turn schoolmaster. It is not the gift of every person, nor of every age, to harangue the multitude, to voice it high and loud, & *dominari in concionibus*. And since experience fits for government, and age usually brings experience, perhaps the most governing years are the least preaching years.

(2.) In the second place therefore, there is a teaching *mediately*, by the subordinate ministration of others; in which, since the action of the instrumental agent is, upon all grounds of reason, to be ascribed to the principal, he, who ordains and furnishes all his churches with able preachers, is an universal teacher; he instructs where he cannot be present; he speaks in every mouth of his diocese, and every congregation of it every *Sunday* feels his influence, though it hears not his voice. That master deprives not his family of their food, who orders a faithful steward to dispense it. Teaching is not a flow of words, nor the draining of an hour-glass, but an effectual procuring, that a man comes to know something which he knew not before, or to know it better: And therefore eloquence and ability of speech is to a church governor, as *Tully* said it was to a philosopher, *Si afferatur, non repudianda; si absit, non magnopere deside-*

desideranda: And to find fault with such an one for not being a popular speaker, is to blame a painter for not being a good musician.

To teach indeed must be confessed his duty, but then there is a teaching by example, by authority, by restraining seducers, and so removing the hindrances of knowledge: And a bishop does his church, his prince and country more service by ruling other mens tongues, than he can by employing his own. And thus much for the first branch of the great work belonging to a pastor of the church, which was to *teach* and to *exhort*.

2. The second is to *rule*, expressed in these words, *Rebuke with all authority*. By which I doubt not but the apostle principally intends church-censures; and so the words are a metonymy of the part for the whole, giving an instance in ecclesiastical censures, instead of all other ecclesiastical jurisdiction: A jurisdiction, which, in the essentials of it, is as old as christianity; and even in those circumstantial additions of secular encouragement, with which the piety and wisdom of christian princes always thought necessary to support it against the encroachment of the injurious world, much older, and more venerable, than any constitution that has divested the church of it.

But

But to speak directly to the thing before us: We see here the great apostle employing the utmost of his authority in commanding *Titus* to use his. And what he said to him, he says to every christian bishop after him, *Rebuke with all authority*. This authority is a spiritual sword put into the hands of every church ruler; and God put not this sword into his hands, with an intent that he should keep it there for no other purpose, but only for fashion's sake, as men use to wear one by their sides. Government is an art above the attainment of an ordinary genius, and requires a wider, a larger, and a more comprehending soul than God has put into every body. The spirit which animates and acts the universe, is a spirit of government; and that ruler that is possessed of it, is the substitute and vicegerent of Providence, whether in church or state; every bishop is God's curate. Now the nature of government contains in it these three parts.

(1.) An exaction of duty from the persons placed under it.

(2.) A protection of them in the performance of their duty.

(3.) Coercion and animadversion upon such as neglect it. All which are, in their proportion, ingredients of that government which we call *Ecclesiastical*.

(1.) And first, it implies exaction of duty from the persons placed under it: For it is both to be confessed and lamented, that men are not so ready to offer it, where it is not exacted: Otherwise, what means the service of the church so imperfectly, and by halves read over, and that by many who profess a conformity to the rules of the church? What makes them mince and mangle that in their practice, which they could swallow whole in their subscriptions? Why are the publick prayers curtail'd and left out, prayers compos'd with sobriety, and enjoined with authority, only to make the more room for a long, crude, impertinent, upstart harangue before the sermon?

Such persons seem to conform (the signification of which word they never make good) only that they may despise the church's injunctions under the church's wing, and contemn authority within the protection of the laws. Duty is but another *English* word for debt; and God knows, that it is well if men pay their debts when they are called upon. But if governors do not remind men of, and call them to obedience, they will find, that it will never come as a *free-will offering*, no not from *many*, who even serve at the altar.

(2.) Government imports a protection and encouragement of the persons under it, in the
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discharge of their duty. It is not for a magistrate to frown upon, and brow-beat those who are hearty and exact in the management of their ministry; and with a grave, insignificant nod, to call a well-regulated and resolved zeal, *want of prudence and moderation*. Such discouraging of men in the ways of an active conformity to the church's rules, is that, which will crack the sinews of government; for it weakens the hands, and damps the spirits of the obedient: And if only scorn and rebuke shall attend men for asserting the church's dignity, and *taxing the murder of kings*, and the like; many will chuse rather to neglect their duty safely and creditably, than to get a broken pate in the church's service, only to be rewarded with that, which shall *break* their hearts too.

(3.) The third thing implied in government, is coercion and animadversion upon such as neglect their duty: Without which coercive power, all government is but toothless and precarious, and does not so much command, as beg obedience. Nothing, I confess, is more becoming a Christian, of what degree soever, than meekness, candour, and condescension; but they are virtues that have their proper sphere and season to act and shew themselves in, and consequently not to interfere with others, different indeed in their nature, but

altogether as necessary in their use. And when an insolent despiser of discipline, nurtured into impudence and contempt of all order, by a long risque of licence and rebellion, shall appear before a church governor, severity and resolution are that governor's virtues, and justice itself is his mercy; for by making such an one an example (as much as in him lies) he will either cure him, or, at least, preserve others.

Were indeed the consciences of men as they should be, the censures of the church might be a sufficient coercion upon them; but being, as most of them now-a-days are, *hell and damnation proof*, her bare anathema's fall but like so many *bruta fulmina* upon the obstinate and schismatical; who are like to think themselves shrewdly hurt (forsooth) by being cut off from that body, which they chuse not to be of; and so being punished into a quiet enjoyment of their beloved separation, some will, by no means, allow the church any further power than only to *exhort* and to *advise*, and this but with a proviso too, that it extends not to such as think themselves too wise, and too great to be advised. According to the hypothesis of which persons, the authority of the church, and the obliging force of all church sanctions, can bespeak men only thus; *These and these things it is your duty to do, and if you will not*

do them, you may as well let them alone. A strict and efficacious constitution indeed, which invests the church with no power at all, but where men will be so very civil as to obey it, and so at the same time pay it a duty, and do it a courtesy too.

But when, in the judgment of some men, the spiritual function, as such, must render a church-man, though otherwise never so discreet and qualified, yet merely because he is a church-man, unfit to be entrusted by his prince with a share of that power and jurisdiction, which, in many circumstances, his prince has judged but too necessary to secure the affairs and dignity of the church; and which every thriving grasier can think himself but ill dealt with, if, within his own country, he is not mounted to; it is a sign, that such discontented persons intend not that religion shall advise them upon any other terms, than that they may ride and govern their religion.

But surely all our kings and our parliaments understood well enough what they did, when they thought fit to prop and fortify the spiritual order with some power that was temporal; and such is the present state of the world, in the judgment of any observing eye, that if the bishop has no other defensatives but excommunication, no other power but that of the keys, he may,

for any notable effect that he is like to do upon the factious and contumacious, surrender up his pastoral staff, shut up the church, and put those keys under the door.

And thus I have endeavoured to shew the three things included in the general nature of government; but to prescribe the manner of it in particular, is neither in my power nor inclination: Only I suppose, the common theory and speculation of things is free and open to any one whom God has sent into the world with some ability to contemplate, and by continuing him in the world, gives him also opportunity. In all that has been said, I do not in the least pretend to advise, or chalk out rules to my superiors; for some men cannot be fools with so good acceptance as others. But whosoever is called to speak upon a certain occasion, may, I conceive, without offence, take any text suitable to that occasion, and having taken it, may, or at least ought, to speak suitably to that text.

II. I proceed now to the second thing proposed from the words; which is the means assigned for the discharge of the duties mentioned and exhibited under this one short prescription, *Let no man despise thee*. In the handling of which I shall shew,

1. The ill effects and destructive influence that contempt has upon government.

2. The groundless causes upon which church rulers are frequently despised.

3. And lastly, the just causes that would render them, or indeed any other rulers, worthy to be despised. All which being clearly made out, and impartially laid before our eyes, it will be easy and obvious for every one, by avoiding the evil so marked out, to answer and come up to the apostle's exhortation. And,

1. We will discourse of contempt, and the malign, hostile influence it has upon government. As for the thing itself, every man's experience will inform him, that there is no action in the behaviour of one man towards another, of which human nature is more impatient than of contempt, it being a thing made up of those two ingredients, an undervaluing of a man, upon a belief of his utter uselessness and inability, and a spiteful endeavour to engage the rest of the world in the same belief and slight esteem of him: So that the immediate design of contempt, is the shame of the person contemned; and shame is a banishment of him from the good opinion of the world, which every man most earnestly desires, both upon a principle of nature and of interest: For it is natural to all men to affect a good name; and he that despises

a man, libels him in his thoughts, reviles and traduces him in his judgment. And there is also interest in the case; for a desire to be well thought of, directly resolves itself into that owned and mighty principle of self-preservation: forasmuch as thoughts are the first wheels and motives of action, and there is no long passage from one to the other. He that thinks a man to the ground, will quickly endeavour to lay him there; for while he despises him, he arraigns and condemns him in his heart; and the after-bitterness and cruelties of his practices, are but the executioners of the sentence passed before upon him by his judgment. Contempt, like the planet *Saturn*, has first an ill aspect, and then a destroying influence.

By all which, I suppose, it is sufficiently proved, how noxious it must needs be to every governor: For, can a man respect the person whom he despises? And can there be obedience, where there is not so much as respect? Will the knee bend, while the heart insults? And the actions submit, while the apprehensions rebel? And therefore the most experienced disturbers and underminers of government have always laid their first train in contempt, endeavouring to blow it up in the judgment and esteem of the subject: And was not this method observed in the late most flourishing and successful

successful rebellion? For how studiously did they lay about them, both from the pulpit and the press, to cast a slur upon the king's person, and to bring his governing abilities under a disrepute? And then, after they had sufficiently blasted him in his *personal capacity*, they found it easy work to dash and overthrow him in his *political*.

Reputation is power; and consequently to despise is to weaken: For where there is contempt, there can be no awe; and where there is no awe, there will be no subjection; and if there is no subjection, it is impossible, without the help of the former distinction of a politick capacity, to imagine how a prince can be a governor. He that makes his prince despised and undervalued, blows a trumpet against him in mens breasts, beats him out of his subjects hearts, and fights him out of their affections; and after this, he may easily strip him of his other garisons, having already dispossessed him of his strongest, by dismantling him of his honour, and seizing his reputation.

Nor is, what has been said of princes, less true of all other governors, from highest to lowest; from him that heads an army, to him that is master of a family, or of one single servant; the formal reason of a thing equally extending itself to every particular of the same kind.

kind. It is a proposition of eternal verity, that none can govern while he is despised. We may as well imagine that there may be a king without majesty, a supreme without sovereignty. It is a paradox, and a direct contradiction in practice; for where contempt takes place, the very causes and capacities of government cease.

Men are so far from being governed by a despised person, that they will not so much as be taught by him. Truth itself shall lose its credit, if delivered by a person that has none. As on the contrary, be but a person in vogue and credit with the multitude, he shall be able to commend and set off whatsoever he says, to authorize any nonsense, and to make popular, rambling, incoherent stuff (seasoned with twang and tautology) pass for high rhetorick, and *moving preaching*; such indeed as a zealous tradesman would even *live and die under*. And now, I suppose it is no ill topick of argumentation, to shew the prevalence of contempt, by the contrary influences of respect; which thus (as it were) dubs every little, petit, admired person, lord and commander of all his admirers. And certain it is, that the ecclesiastical, as well as the civil governor, has cause to pursue the same methods of securing and confirming himself; the grounds and means of government being founded upon the same bottom of nature

nature in both, though the circumstances and relative considerations of the persons may differ. And I have nothing to say more upon this head, but that if Churchmen are called upon to discharge the parts of governors, they may, with the highest reason, expect those supports and helps that are indispensably requisite thereunto; and that those men are but trappanned, who are called to govern, being invested with authority, but bereaved of power; which, according to a true and plain estimate of things, is nothing else but to mock and betray them into a splendid and magisterial way of being ridiculous. And thus much for the ill effects and destructive influence that contempt has upon government.

2. I pass now to the second thing; which is to shew, the groundless causes upon which church rulers are frequently despised.

Concerning which I shall premise this, that nothing can be a reasonable ground of despising a man, but some fault or other chargeable upon him; and nothing can be a fault, that is not naturally in a man's power to prevent; otherwise, it is a man's unhappiness, his mischance, or calamity, but not his fault. Nothing can justly be despised, that cannot justly be blamed: And it is a most certain rule in reason
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and moral philosophy, that where there is no choice, there can be no blame.

This premised, we may take notice of two usual grounds of the contempt men cast upon the clergy, and yet for which no man ought to think himself at all the more worthy to be contemned.

(1.) The first is their very profession itself; concerning which it is a sad, but an experimental truth, that the names derived from it, in the refined language of the present age, are made but the appellatives of scorn. This is not charged universally upon all; but experience will affirm, or rather proclaim it of much the greater part of the world; and men must persuade us that we have lost our hearing, and our common sense, before we can believe the contrary. But surely the bottom and foundation of this behaviour towards persons set apart for the service of God, that this very relation should intitle them to such a peculiar scorn, can be nothing else but atheism; the growing rampant sin of the times.

For call a man oppressor, griping, covetous, or over-reaching person, and the word indeed, being ill befriended by custom, perhaps sounds not well; but generally, in the apprehension of the hearer, it signifies no more than that such an one is a wise, and a thriving,

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thriving, or, in the common phrase, a *notable man*; which will certainly procure him a respect: And say of another, that he is an epicure, a loose, or a vicious man, and it leaves in men no other opinion of him, than that he is a merry, pleasant, and a genteel person: and that he that taxes him, is but a *pedant*, an *unexperienced*, and a *morose fellow*; one that does not *know men*, nor understand what it is to *eat and drink well*. But call a man *priest* or *parson*, and you set him, in some mens esteem, ten degrees below his own servant.

But let us not be discouraged or displeased, either with ourselves, or our profession, upon this account. Let the virtuoso's mock, insult, and despise on; yet, after all, they shall never be able to droll away the nature of things, to trample a pearl into a pebble, nor to make sacred things contemptible; any more than themselves, by such speeches, honourable.

(2.) Another groundless cause of some mens despising the governors of our church, is their loss of that former grandeur and privilege that they enjoyed. But it is no real disgrace to the church merely to lose her privileges, but to forfeit them by her fault or misdemeanor, of which she is not conscious. Whatever she enjoyed in this kind, she readily acknowledges to have streamed from the royal
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munificence, and the favours of the civil power shining upon the spiritual; which favours the same power may retract and gather back into itself, when it pleases. And we envy not the greatness and lustre of the *Romish* clergy; neither their scarlet gowns, nor their scarlet fins. If our church cannot be great, she can be humble, which is better, and content to be reformed into as low a condition, as men for their own private advantage would have her, who wisely tell her, that it is best and safest for her to be without any power or temporal advantage; like the good physician, who, out of tenderness to his patient, lest he should hurt himself by drinking, was so kind as to rob him of his silver cup. The church of *England* glories in nothing more than that she is the truest friend to kings, and to kingly government, of any other church in the world; that they were the same hands and principles that took the crown from the king's head, and the mitre from the bishops. It is indeed the happiness of some professions and callings, that they can equally square themselves to, and thrive under all revolutions of government: But the clergy of *England* neither know nor affect that happiness, and are willing to be despised for not doing so. And so far is our church from encroaching upon the

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the civil power, as some, who are back-friends to both, would maliciously insinuate, that, were it stripped of the very remainder of its privileges, and made as like the primitive church for its barrenness, as it is already for its purity, it could *cheerfully*, and, what is more, *loyally*, want all such privileges; and, in the want of them, pray heartily, that the civil power may flourish as much, and stand as secure from the assaults of fanatick, antimonarchical principles (grown to such a dreadful height during the church's late confusions) as it stood while the church enjoyed those privileges. And thus much for the two *groundless causes*, upon which church-rulers are frequently despised; I descend now to the

3. And last thing; which is to shew those *just causes*, that would render them, or indeed any other rulers, worthy to be despised. Many might be assigned; but I shall pitch only upon four. In discoursing of which, rather the time, than the subject, will force me to be very brief.

(1.) And the first is *Ignorance*. We know how great an absurdity our Saviour accounted it, *for the blind to lead the blind*; and to put him that cannot so much as see, to discharge the office of a watch. Nothing more exposes to contempt than *ignorance*. When *Sampson's* eyes were out, of a publick magistrate he was made

made a publick sport. And when *Eli* was blind, we know how well he governed his sons, and how well they governed the church under him. But now the blindness of the understanding is greater and more scandalous; especially in such a seeing age as ours, in which the very knowledge of former times passes but for ignorance in a better dress; an age that flies at all learning, and enquires into every thing, but especially into faults and defects. Ignorance indeed, so far as it may be resolved into natural inability, is, as to men at least, inculpable; and consequently not the object of scorn, but pity; but, in a governor, it cannot be without the conjunction of the highest impudence: For who bid such an one aspire to teach and to govern? A blind man sitting in the chimney corner is pardonable enough, but sitting at the helm, he is intolerable. If men will be ignorant and illiterate, let them be so in private, and to themselves, and not set their defects in an high place, to make them visible and conspicuous. If owls will not be hooted at, let them keep close within the tree, and not perch upon the upper boughs.

(2.) A second thing that makes a governor justly despised, is viciousness and ill morals. Virtue is that, which must tip the preacher's tongue, and the ruler's sceptre, with authority: And therefore

therefore with what a controuling over-powering force did our Saviour tax the sins of the *Jews*, when he ushered in his rebukes of them, with that high assertion of himself, *Who is there amongst you, that convinces me of sin?* Otherwise we may easily guess with what impatience the world would have heard an incestuous *Herod* discoursing of chastity, a *Judas* condemning covetousness, or a *Pharisee* preaching against hypocrisy: Every word must have recoiled upon the speaker. Guilt is that, which quells the courage of the bold, ties the tongue of the eloquent, and makes greatness itself sneak and lurk, and behave itself poorly. For, let a vicious person be in never so high command, yet still he will be lookt upon but as one great vice, empowered to correct and chastise others. A corrupt governor is nothing else but a reigning sin: And a sin in office may command any thing but respect. No man can be credited by his place or power, who by his virtue does not *first credit that*.

3. A third thing that makes a governor justly despised, is fearfulness of, and mean compliances with bold, popular offenders. Some indeed account it the very spirit of policy and prudence, where men refuse to come up to a law, to make the law come down to them.

And for their so doing, have this infallible recompence, that they are not at all *the more loved*, but much *the less feared*; and, which is a sure consequent of it, accordingly respected. But believe it, it is a resolute tenacious adherence to well-chosen principles, that adds glory to greatness, and makes the face of a governor shine in the eyes of those that see and examine his actions. Disobedience, if complied with, is infinitely encroaching, and having gained one degree of liberty upon indulgence, will demand another upon claim. Every vice interprets a connivance an approbation.

Which being so, Is it not an enormous indecency, as well as a gross impiety, that any one who owns the name of a divine, hearing a great sinner brave it against heaven, talk atheistically, and scoff profanely at that religion, by which he owns an expectation to be saved, if he cares to be saved at all, should, instead of vindicating the truth to the blasphemer's teeth, think it discretion and moderation (forsooth) with a complying silence, and perhaps a smile to boot, tacitly to approve, and strike in with the scoffer, and so go sharer both in the mirth and guilt of his profane jests?

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But let such an one be assured, that even that blasphemer himself would inwardly reverence him, if rebuked by him; as, on the contrary, he in his heart really despises him for his cowardly base silence. If any one should reply here, that the times and manners of men will not bear such a practice, I confess, that it is an answer, from the mouth of a professed time-server, very rational: But, as for that man, that is not so, let him satisfy himself of the reason, justice, and duty of an action, and leave the event of it to God, who will never fail those, who do not think themselves too wise to trust him. For, let the worst come to the worst, a man in so doing would be ruined more honourably than otherwise preferred.

4. And lastly. A fourth thing that makes a governor justly despised, is a proneness to despise others. There is a kind of respect due to the meanest person, even from the greatest; for it is the mere favour of Providence, that he, who is actually the greatest, was not the meanest. A man cannot cast his respects so low, but they will rebound and return upon him. What heaven bestows what earth in kind influences, and benign aspects, is paid it back again in sacrifice, incense, and adoration. And surely a great person gets more by obliging his inferior, than he can by

disdaining him; as a man has a greater advantage by sowing and dressing his ground, than he can have by *trampling* upon it. It is not to insult and domineer, to look disdainfully, and revile imperiously, that procures an esteem from any one; it will indeed make men keep their distance sufficiently, but it will be *distance* without *reverence*.

And thus I have shewn four several causes that may justly render any ruler despised; and by the same work, I hope, have made it evident, how little cause men have to despise the rulers of our church.

God is the fountain of honour, and the conduit by which he conveys it to the sons of men, are virtuous and generous practices. But as for us, who have more immediately and nearly devoted, both our persons and concerns to his service, it were infinitely vain to expect it upon any other terms. Some indeed may please and promise themselves high matters, from full revenues, stately palaces, court-interests, and great dependencies: But that which makes the clergy glorious, is to be knowing in their profession, unspotted in their lives, active and laborious in their charges, bold and resolute in opposing seducers, and daring to look vice in the face, though never so potent and illustrious.

And

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And lastly, to be gentle, courteous, and compassionate to all.

These are our robes and our maces, our escutcheons, and highest titles of honour: For by all these things God is honoured, who has declared this the eternal rule and standard of all honour derivable upon men, *that those who honour him, shall be honoured by him.*

To which God, fearful in praises, and working wonders, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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*Why CHRIST'S Doctrine was rejected
by the Jews.*

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JOHN vii. 17.

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SERMON VI.

Why Christ's Doctrine was
rejected by the *Jews*.

JOHN vii. 17.

*If any man will do his will, he shall
know of the doctrine, whether it be
of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

WHEN God was pleased to new-model
the world by the introduction of a new
religion, and that in the room of one set up
by himself, it was requisite that he should re-
commend it to the reasons of men with the
same authority and evidence that enforced the
former; and that a religion established by God
himself should not be displaced by any thing
under a demonstration of that Divine Power
that first introduced it. And the whole *Jewish*

occo-

oeconomy, we know, was brought in with miracles; the law was writ and confirmed by the same Almighty Hand: The whole universe was subservient to its promulgation: The signs of *Egypt* and the *Red-Sea*; fire and a voice from heaven; the heights of the one, and the depths of the other; so that (as it were) from the top to the bottom of nature there issued forth one universal united testimony of the divinity of the *Mosaick* law and religion. And this stood in the world for the space of two thousand years; till at length, in the fulness of time, the reason of men ripening to such a pitch, as to be above the pedagogy of *Moses's* rod, and the discipline of types, God thought fit to display the *substance* without the *shadow*, and to read the world a lecture of an higher and more sublime religion in Christianity. But the *Jewish* was yet in possession, and therefore that this might so enter, as not to intrude, it was to bring its warrant from the same hand of Omnipotence. And for this cause, Christ, that he might not make either a suspected or precarious address to men's understandings, out-does *Moses*, before he displaces him; shews an ascendant spirit above him, raises the *dead*, and cures *more plagues* than he brought upon *Egypt*, casts out *devils*, and heals the *deaf*, speaking such words, as even gave *ears* to hear them;

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them; cures the *blind* and the *lame*, and makes the very *dumb* to speak for the truth of his doctrine. But what was the *result* of all this? Why, some look upon him as an impostor, and a conjurer, as an agent for *Beelzebub*, and therefore reject his *gospel*, hold fast their *law*, and will not let *Moses* give place to the *magician*.

Now the *cause* that Christ's doctrine was rejected, must of necessity be one of these two.

1. An insufficiency in the arguments brought by *Christ* to enforce it. Or, 2. An indisposition in the persons to whom this doctrine was addressed, to receive it.

And for this, Christ who had not only an infinite power to work miracles, but also an equal wisdom both to know the just force and measure of every argument, or motive to persuade or cause assent; and withal, to look thro' and through all the dark corners of the soul of man, all the windings and turnings, and various workings of his faculties; and to discern how, and by what means they are to be wrought upon; and what prevails upon them, and what does not: He, I say, states the whole matter upon this issue; that the arguments by which his doctrine address'd itself to the minds of men, were proper, adequate, and sufficient to compass their respective ends in persuading,
or

or convincing the persons to whom they were proposed; and moreover, that there was no such defect in the natural light of man's understanding, or knowing faculty; but that, considered in itself, it would be apt enough to *close* with, and yield its assent to the evidence of those arguments duly *offered* to, and laid before it. And yet, that after all this, the event proved otherwise; and that notwithstanding both the weight and fitness of the arguments to persuade, and the light of man's intellect to meet this persuasive evidence with a suitable assent, no assent followed, nor were men thereby actually persuaded; he charges it wholly upon the corruption, the perverseness, and viciousity of man's will, as the only cause that render'd all the arguments his doctrine came cloathed with, unsuccessful. And consequently, he affirms here in the text, that men must love the truth before they thoroughly believe it; and that the Gospel has then only a free admission into the assent of the understanding, when it brings a passport from a rightly disposed will, as being the great faculty of dominion, that commands all, that shuts out, and lets in what objects it pleases, and, in a word, keeps the keys of the whole soul.

This

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This is the design and purport of the words, which I shall draw forth and handle in the prosecution of these four following heads.

I. I shall shew what the doctrine of Christ was, that the world so much stuck at, and was so averse from believing.

II. I shall shew, that mens unbelief of it was from no defect or insufficiency in the arguments brought by Christ to enforce it.

III. I shall shew, what was the true and proper cause, into which this unbelief was resolved.

IV. And lastly, I shall shew, that a pious and well-disposed mind, attended with a readiness to obey the known Will of God, is the surest and best means to enlighten the understanding to a belief of christianity.

Of these in their order: And,

I. For the *doctrine of Christ*. We must take it in the known and common division of it, into *matters of belief*, and *matters of practice*.

The matters of belief related chiefly to his person and offices. As, “ That he was the
“ *Messias* that should come into the world:
“ The eternal Son of God, begotten of him
“ before all worlds: That in time he was made
“ man, and born of a pure virgin: That he
“ should die and satisfy for the sins of the
“ world; and that he should rise again from
the

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“ the dead, and ascend into heaven ; and there
 “ sitting at the right hand of God, hold the
 “ government of the whole world, till the
 “ great and last day ; in which he should judge
 “ both the quick and the dead, raised to life
 “ again with the very same bodies ; and then
 “ deliver up all rule and government into the
 “ hands of his father.” These were the great
 articles and *credenda* of christianity, that so
 much startled the world, and seemed to be such
 as not only brought in a new religion amongst
 men, but also required new reason to em-
 brace it.

The other part of his doctrine lay in mat-
 ters of practice ; which we find contained in
 his several sermons, but principally in that
 glorious, full, and admirable discourse upon the
 mount ; recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chap-
 ters of St. *Mat*. All which particulars, if we
 would reduce to one general comprehensive
 head, they are all wrapt up in the doctrine of
*self-denial**, prescribing to the world the most
 inward *purity of heart*, and a constant conflict
 with all our sensual appetites, and worldly inte-
 rests, even to the quitting of all that is dear to
 us, and the sacrificing of life itself, rather than
 knowingly to omit the least duty, or commit

* *Sermon the third, p. 83.*

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the least sin. And this was that which grated harder upon, and raised greater tumults and boilings in the hearts of men, than the strangeness and seeming unreasonableness of all the former articles, that took up chiefly in speculation and belief.

And that this was so, will appear from a consideration of the state and condition the world was in, as to religion, when Christ promulged his doctrine. Nothing farther than the outward action was then looked after, and when that failed, there was an *expiation* ready in the *opus operatum* of a sacrifice. So that all their virtue and religion lay in their folds and their stalls, and what was wanting in the *innocence*, the *blood of lambs* was to supply. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were the great doctors of the *Jewish* church, expounded the law no farther. They accounted no man a murderer, but he that stuck a knife into his brother's heart; no man an adulterer, but he that actually defiled his neighbour's bed. They thought it no injustice nor irreligion to prosecute the severest retaliation or revenge; so that at the same time their outward man might be a saint, and their inward man a devil. No care at all was had to curb the unruliness of anger, or the exorbitance of desire. Amongst all their sacrifices, they never sacrificed so much

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as one lust. Bulls and goats bled apace, but neither the violence of the one, nor the wantonness of the other, ever died a victim at any of their altars. So that no wonder that a doctrine which arraigned the irregularities of the most inward motions and affections of the soul, and told men, that anger and harsh words were murder, and looks and desires, adultery; that a man might stab with his tongue, and assassinate with his mind, pollute himself with a glance, and forfeit eternity by a cast of his eye; no wonder, I say, that such a doctrine made a strange bustle and disturbance in the world, which then sat warm and easy in a free enjoyment of their lusts; ordering matters so, that they put a *trick upon the great rule of virtue, the law*, and made a shift to think themselves guiltless, in spite of all their sins; to break the precept, and at the same time to baffle the curse; contriving themselves such a sort of holiness, as should please God, and themselves too; justify and save them harmless, but never sanctify, nor make them better.

But the severe notions of Christianity turned all this upside down, filling all with surprize and amazement; they came upon the world, like light darting full upon the face of a man asleep, who had a mind to sleep on, and not to be disturbed: they were terrible astonishing
alarms

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alarms to persons grown fat and wealthy by a long and successful imposture ; by suppressing the true sense of the law, by putting another veil upon *Moses* ; and, in a word, persuading the world, that men might be honest and religious, happy, and blessed, tho' they never denied nor mortified one of their corrupt appetites.

And thus much for the first thing proposed ; which was to give you a brief draught of *the doctrine of Christ*, that met with so little assent from the world in general, and from the *Jews* in particular. I come now to the

II. Second thing proposed : which was to shew, *That mens unbelief of Christ's doctrine was from no defect or insufficiency in the arguments brought by Christ to enforce it.* This I shall make appear two ways.

1. By shewing, that the arguments spoken of were in themselves convincing and sufficient.

2. By shewing, that upon supposition they were not so, yet their insufficiency was not the cause of their rejection.

1. And first for the first of these : *That the arguments brought by Christ for the confirmation of his doctrine were in themselves convincing and sufficient.* I shall insist only upon the convincing power of the two principal ; one from the

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Prophecies recorded concerning him, the other from the miracles done by him. Of both very briefly. And for the *former*: There was a full intire harmony and consent of all the divine predictions receiving their completion in Christ. The strength of which argument *lies* in this; that it evinces the divine mission of Christ's person, and thereby proves him to be the *Messias*; which by consequence proves and asserts the truth of his doctrine; for he that was so sent by God, could declare nothing but the will of God. And so evidently do all the prophecies agree to Christ, that I dare with great confidence affirm, that if the prophecies recorded of the *Messiah* are not fulfilled in *Jesus of Nazareth*, it is impossible to know or distinguish, when a prophecy is fulfilled, and when not, in any thing or person whatsoever; which would utterly evacuate the use of them. But in Christ they all meet with such an invincible lustre and evidence, as if they were not predictions, but after-relations; and the pen-men of them not prophets, but evangelists. And now, can any kind of ratiocination allow Christ all the marks of the *Messiah*, and yet deny him to be the *Messiah*? Could he have all the signs, and yet not be the thing signified? Could the shadows that followed him, and were cast from him, belong to any other body?

All

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All these things were absurd and unnatural ; and therefore the force of this argument was undeniable.

Nor was that other from the miracles done by him at all inferior. The strength and force of which, to prove the things they are alledged for, consists in this ; that a miracle being a work exceeding the power of any created agent, and consequently being an effect of the Divine Omnipotence, when it is done to give credit and authority to any word or doctrine declared to proceed from God, either that doctrine must really proceed from God, as it is declared ; or God by that work of his Almighty Power must bear witness to a falshood ; and so bring the creature under the greatest obligations, that can possibly engage the assent of a rational nature, to believe and assent to a lye. For surely a greater reason than this cannot be produced for the belief of any thing, than for a man to stand up and say, This and this I tell you as the mind and word of God ; and to prove that it is so, I will do that before your eyes, that you yourselves shall confess can be done by nothing, but the Almighty Power of that God that can neither deceive, nor be deceived. Now if this be an irrefragable way to convince, as the reason of all mankind must confess it to be, then Christ's doctrine came

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attended and enforced with the greatest means of conviction imaginable. Thus much for the argument *in thesi*; and then for the *assumption*, that Christ did such miraculous and supernatural works to confirm what he said, we need only repeat the message sent by him to *John the Baptist*: *That the dumb spake, the blind saw, the lame walked, and the dead were raised.* Which particulars none of his bitterest enemies ever pretended to deny, they being conveyed to them by an evidence past all exception, even the evidence of sense; nay, of the quickest, the surest, and most authentick of all the senses, the *sight*: which if it be not certain in the reports and representations it makes of things to the mind, there neither is, nor can be naturally, any such thing as certainty or knowledge in the world. And thus much for the first part of the second general thing proposed; namely, *That the arguments brought by Christ for the proof of his doctrine, were in themselves convincing and sufficient.*

2. I come now to the other part of it, which is to shew, *That admitting or supposing that they were not sufficient, yet their insufficiency was not the cause of their actual rejection.* Which will appear from these following reasons:

(1.) Be-

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(1.) Because those who rejected Christ's doctrine, and the arguments by which he confirmed it, fully believed and assented to other things conveyed to them with *less evidence*. Such as were even the miracles of *Moses* himself, upon the credit and authority of which stood the whole œconomy of the *Jewish* constitution. For tho' I grant that they believed his miracles upon the credit of constant unerring tradition, both written and unwritten, and grant also that such tradition was of as great *certainty* as the reports of *sense*; yet still I affirm that it was not of the same *evidence*, which yet is the greatest and most immediate ground of all assent.

The evidence of sense (as I have noted) is the clearest that naturally the mind of man can receive, and is indeed the foundation both of all the *evidence* and *certainty* too, that tradition is capable of; which pretends to no other credibility from the testimony and *word* of some men, but because their *word* is at length traced up to, and originally terminates in, the sense and experience of some others, which could not be known beyond that compass of time in which it was exercised, but by being told and reported to such as, not living at that time, saw it not, and by them to others, and so down from one age to another. For we

therefore believe the report of some men concerning a thing, because it implies that there were some others who actually saw that thing. It is clear therefore, that want of evidence could not be the cause that the *Jews* rejected and disbelieved the *gospel*, since they embraced and believed the *law* upon the credit of those miracles that were *less evident*. For those of Christ they knew by *sight* and *sense*, those of *Moses* only by *tradition*; which, tho' equally *certain*, yet were by no means equally *evident with the other*.

(2.) They believed and assented to things that were neither *evident*, nor *certain*, but only *probable*; for they conversed, they traded, they merchandized, and by so doing, frequently ventured their whole estates and fortunes upon a probable belief or persuasion of the honesty and truth of those whom they dealt and corresponded with. And interest, especially in worldly matters, and yet more especially with a *Jew*, never proceeds but upon supposal, at least, of a firm and sufficient bottom: from whence it is manifest, that since they could believe, and practically rely upon, and that even in their dearest concerns, bare probabilities; they could not, with any colour of reason pretend want of evidence for their disbelief
of

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of Christ's doctrine, which came inforced with arguments far surpassing all such probabilities.

3. They believed and assented to things neither evident nor certain ; nor yet so much as probable, but actually false and fallacious. Such as were the absurd doctrines and stories of their *rabbins* : which, though since Christ's time, they have grown much more numerous and fabulous than before, yet even then did so much pester the church, and so grossly abuse and delude the minds of that people, that contradictions themselves asserted by *rabbies* were equally received and revered by them as the sacred and infallible word of God. And whereas they rejected Christ and his doctrine, though every tittle of it came inforced with miracle, and the best arguments that heaven and earth could back it with ; yet Christ then foretold, and after-times confirmed that prediction of his in *John* v. 43. that they *should receive many cheats and deceivers coming to them in their own name* : fellows that set up for *Messias's*, only upon their own heads, without pretending to any thing singular or miraculous, but *impudence* and *imposture*.

From all which it follows, that the *Jews* could not alledge so much as a pretence of the want of evidence in the argument brought by Christ to prove the divinity and authority of

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his doctrine, as a *reason* of their rejection and disbelief of it; since they embraced and believed many things, for some of which they had no *evidence*, and for others of which they had no *certainty*, and for most of which they had not so much as *probability*. Which being so, from whence then could such an obstinate infidelity, in matters of so great clearness and credibility, take its rise? Why, this will be made out to us in the

III. Third thing proposed, which was to shew, *what was the true and proper cause into which this unbelief of the Pharisees was resolved*. And that was, in a word, the captivity of their wills and affections to lusts directly opposite to the design and spirit of christianity. They were extremely ambitious, and insatiably covetous; and therefore no impression from argument or miracle could reach them, but they stood proof against all conviction. Now, to shew how the pravity of the will could influence the understanding to a disbelief of christianity, I shall premise these two considerations:

I. That the understanding, in its assent to any religion, is very differently wrought upon in persons bred up in it, and in persons at length converted to it. For in the first, it finds the mind naked, and unprepossessed with any former notions, and so easily and insensibly gains upon

upon the assent, grows up with it, and incorporates into it. But in persons adult, and already possessed with other notions of religion, the understanding cannot be brought to quit these, and to change them for new, but by great consideration and examination of the truth and firmness of the one, and comparing them with the flaws and weakness of the other. Which cannot be done without some labour and intention of the mind, and the thoughts dwelling a considerable time upon the survey and discussion of each particular.

2. The other thing to be considered, is; that in this great work, the understanding is chiefly at the disposal of the will. For though it is not in the power of the will, *directly* either to cause or hinder the assent of the understanding to a *thing* proposed, and duly set before it; yet it is *antecedently* in the power of the will, to apply the understanding faculty to, or to take it off from the consideration of those objects to which, without such a previous consideration, it cannot yield its assent. For all assent presupposes a simple apprehension or knowledge of the terms of the proposition to be assented to. But unless the understanding employ and exercise its cognitive or apprehensive power about these terms, there can be no actual apprehension of them. And the understanding, as to the exercise

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ercise of this power, is subject to the command of the will ; though, as to the specifick nature of its acts it is determined by the object. As for instance ; my understanding cannot assent to this proposition, *that Jesus Christ is the Son of God* ; but it must first consider, and so apprehend, what the terms and parts of it are, and what they signify. And this cannot be done, if my will be so slothful, worldly, or voluptuously disposed, as never to suffer me at all to think of them ; but perpetually to carry away, and apply my mind to other things. Thus far is the understanding at the disposal of the will.

Now these two considerations being premised ; namely, that persons grown up in the belief of any religion, cannot change that for another, without applying their understanding duly to consider and compare both ; and then, that it is in the power of the will, whether it will suffer the understanding thus to dwell upon such objects or no ; from these two, I say, we have the true philosophy and reason of the *Pharisees* unbelief : For they could not relinquish their *Judaism*, and embrace christianity, without considering, weighing, and collating both religions. And this their understanding could not apply to, if it were diverted, and took off by their will ; and their will
would

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would be sure to divert and take it off, being wholly possessed and governed by their covetousness and ambition, which perfectly abhorred the precepts of such a doctrine. And this is the very account that our Saviour himself gives of this matter in *John v. 44.* *How can ye believe (says he) who receive honour one of another?* He look'd upon it as a thing morally impossible, for persons infinitely proud and ambitious, to frame their minds to an impartial, unbiaſſed conſideration of a religion that taught nothing but ſelf-denial, and the croſs; that humility was honour; and that the higher men climb'd, the farther they were from heaven. They could not, with patience, ſo much as think of it; and therefore, you may be ſure, would never aſſent to it. And again; when Chriſt diſcourſed to them of alms, and a pious diſtribution of the goods and riches of this world, in *Luke xiv.* it is ſaid in the 14th verſe, that *the Pharifees, who were covetous, heard all thoſe things, and derided him.* Charity and liberality is a paradox to the covetous. The doctrine that teaches alms, and the perſons that need them, are by ſuch equally ſent packing. Tell a miſer of bounty to a friend, or mercy to the poor, and point him out his duty with an evidence as bright and piercing as the light, yet he will not underſtand it,

it, but shuts his eyes as close as he does his hands, and resolves not to be convinced. In both these cases, there is an incurable blindness caused by a resolution not to see ; and to all intents and purposes, he who *will not* open his eyes, is, for the present, as blind as he *that cannot*. And thus I have done with the third thing proposed, and shewn what was the *true cause* of the *Pharisees* disbelief of Christ's doctrine : It was the predominance of those two great vices over the will, their covetousness and ambition. Pass we now to the

IV. and last ; which is to shew, that a *pious and well-disposed mind, attended with a readiness to obey the known will of God, is the surest and best means to enlighten the understanding to a belief of christianity*. That it is so, will appear upon a double account.

1. First, upon the account of God's goodness, and the method of his dealing with the souls of men ; which is, to reward every degree of sincere obedience to his will, with a farther discovery of it. *I understand more than the ancients*, says *David*, Psal. cxix. 100. But how did he attain such an excellency of understanding ? Was it by longer study, or a greater quickness and felicity of parts, than was in those before him ? No, he gives the reason in the next words ; it was, *because I keep thy sta-*

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statutes. He got the start of them in point of obedience, and thereby out-stript them, at length, in point of knowledge. And who, in old time, were the men of extraordinary revelations, but those who were also men of extraordinary piety? Who were made privy to the secrets of heaven, and the hidden will of the Almighty, but such as performed his revealed will at an higher rate of strictness than the rest of the world? They were the *Enochs*, the *Abrabams*, the *Elijahs*, and the *Daniels*; such as the scripture remarkably testifies of, that *they walked with God*. And surely, he that walks with another, is in a likelier way to know and understand his mind, than he that follows him at a distance. Upon which account, the learned *Jews* still made this one of the ingredients that went to constitute a prophet, that he should be *perfectus in moralibus*, a person of exact morals, and unblameable in his life; the gift of prophecy being a ray of such a light, as never darts itself upon a dunghil. And what I here observe occasionally of extraordinary revelation and prophecy, will, by analogy and due proportion, extend even to those communications of God's will, that are requisite to mens salvation. An honest, hearty simplicity and proneness to do all that a man knows of God's will, is the ready, certain, and infal-

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infallible way to know more of it. For I am sure it may be said of the practical knowledge of religion, *That to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.*

I dare not, I confess, join in that bold assertion of some, that *facienti quod in se est, Deus nec debet nec potest denegare gratiam*, which indeed is no less than a direct contradiction in the very terms; for if *Deus debet*, then *id quod debetur non est gratia*; there being a perfect inconsistency between that which is of *debt*, and that which is of *free gift*. And therefore leaving the *non debet*, and the *non potest*, to those that can *bind* and *loose* the Almighty at their pleasure; so much, I think, we may pronounce safely in this matter, that the Goodness and Mercy of God is such, that he never deserts a sincere person, nor suffers any one that shall live (even according to these measures of sincerity) up to what he knows, to perish for want of any knowledge *necessary*, and, what is more, *sufficient* to save him.

If any one would here say, Were there then none living up to these measures of sincerity among the *beathen*? And if there were, did the Goodness of God afford such persons knowledge enough to save them? My answer is according to that of St. Paul, *I judge not those that are without the church: they stand or fall*

to

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to their own Master : I have nothing to say of them. *Secret things belong to God*, it becomes us to be thankful to God, and charitable to men.

2. A pious and well-disposed will is the readiest means to enlighten the understanding to a knowledge of the truth of Christianity, upon the account of a *natural efficiency*; forasmuch as a will so disposed will be sure to engage the *mind* in a severe search into the great and concerning truths of religion : nor will it only ingage the mind in such a search ; but it will also accompany that search with two dispositions directly tending to, and principally productive of, the discoveries of truth ; namely, diligence and impartiality. And,

(1.) For the diligence of the search. Diligence is the great harbinger of truth ; which rarely takes up in any mind, till that has gone before, and made room for it. It is a steady, constant, and pertinacious study, that naturally leads the *soul* into the knowledge of that which at first seemed locked up from it ; for this keeps the understanding long in converse with an object, and long converse brings acquaintance. Frequent consideration of a thing wears off the strangeness of it ; and shews it in its several lights, and various ways of appearance to the view of the mind.

Truth

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Truth is a great strong-hold, barred and fortified by God and nature; and diligence is properly the understanding's laying siege to it: so that, as in a kind of warfare, it must be perpetually upon the watch, observing all the avenues and passes to it, and accordingly makes its approaches. Sometimes it thinks it gains a point; and presently again it finds itself baffled and beaten off: yet still it renews the onset; attacks the difficulty afresh; plants this reasoning, and that argument, this consequence, and that distinction, like so many intellectual batteries, till at length it forces a way and passage into the obstinate inclosed truth, that so long withstood and defied all its assaults.

The *Jesuits* have a saying common amongst them, touching the institution of youth, (in which their chief strength and talent lies) that *vexatio dat intellectum*. As when the mind casts and turns itself restlessly from one thing to another, strains this power of the soul to *apprehend*, that to *judge*, another to *divide*, a fourth to *remember*; thus tracing out the nice and scarce-observable difference of some things, and the real agreement of others, till at length it brings all the ends of a long and various *hypothesis* together; sees how one part coheres with, and depends upon another; and so clears off all the appearing contrarieties and contradictions

dictions that seemed to lie cross and uncouth, and to make the whole unintelligible. This is the laborious and vexatious inquest, that the soul must make after science. For truth, like a stately dame, will not be seen, nor shew herself at the first visit, nor match with the understanding upon an ordinary courtship or address. Long and tedious attendances must be given, and the hardest fatigues endured and digested; nor did ever the most pregnant wit in the world bring forth any thing great, lasting, and considerable, without some pain and travail, some pangs and throws before the delivery.

Now all this, that I have said, is to shew the force of diligence in the investigation of truth, and particularly of the noblest of all truths, which is that of religion. But then, as diligence is the great discoverer of truth, so is the will the great spring of diligence; for no man can heartily search after that which he is not very desirous to find. Diligence is to the understanding, as the whetstone to the razor; but the will is the hand that must apply one to the other.

What makes many men so strangely immerse themselves, some in chymical, and some in mathematical inquiries, but because they strangely love the things they labour in? Their intent study gives them skill and proficiency;

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and their particular affection to these kinds of knowledge puts them upon such study. Accordingly, let there be but the same propensity and bent of will to religion, and there will be the same sedulity and indefatigable industry in mens inquiry into it. And then, in the natural course of things, the consequent of a sedulous *seeking* is *finding*, and the fruit of inquiry is information.

(2.) A pious and well-disposed will gives not only *diligence*, but also *impartiality* to the understanding, in its search into religion, which is as absolutely necessary to give success to our inquiries into truth, as the former; it being scarce possible for that man to hit the mark, whose eye is still glancing upon something beside it. Partiality is properly the understanding's judging according to the inclination of the will and affections, and not according to the exact truth of things, or the merits of the cause before it. Affection is still a briber of the judgment; and it is hard for a man to admit a reason against the thing he loves, or to confess the force of an argument against an interest.

In this case he prevaricates with his own understanding, and cannot seriously and sincerely set his mind to consider the strength, to poise the weight, and to discern the evidence

of

of the clearest and best argumentations, where they would conclude against the darling of his desires. For still that beloved thing possesses, and even engrosses him, and, like a coloured glass before his eyes, casts its own colour and tincture upon all the images and ideas of things that pass from the fancy to the understanding; and so absolutely does it sway that, that if a strange irresistible evidence of some unacceptable truth should chance to surprize and force reason to assent to the premises, affection would yet step in at last, and make it quit the conclusion.

Upon which account, *Socinus* and his followers state the reason of a man's believing or embracing christianity upon the natural goodness, or virtuous disposition of his mind, which they sometimes call *naturalis probitas*, and sometimes *animus in virtutem pronus*. For (say they) the whole doctrine of christianity teaches nothing but what is perfectly suitable to, and coincident with the ruling principles, that a virtuous and well-inclined man is acted by, and with the main interest that he proposes to himself. So that, as soon as ever it is declared to such an one, he presently closes in, accepts, and complies with it: As a prepared soil eagerly takes in, and firmly retains such seed or plants as particularly agree with it.

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With ordinary minds, such as much the greatest part of the world are, 'tis the *suitableness*, not the evidence of a truth, that makes it to be assented to. And it is seldom that any thing practically convinces a man, that does not please him first. If you would be sure of him, you must inform and gratify him too. But now, impartiality strips the mind of prejudice and passion, keeps it right and even from the byas of interest and desire, and so presents it like a *rasa tabula*, equally disposed to the reception of all truth. So that the soul lies prepared, and open to entertain it, and prepossessed with nothing that can oppose, or thrust it out : for where diligence opens the door of the understanding, and impartiality keeps it, truth is sure to find both an entrance, and a welcome too.

And thus I have done with the fourth and last general thing proposed, and proved by argument; That *a pious and well-disposed mind, attended with a readiness to obey the known will of God, is the surest and best means to enlighten the understanding to a belief of christianity.*

Now, from the foregoing particulars, by way of use, we may collect these two things.

1. The true cause of that atheism, that scepticism, and cavilling at religion, which we see, and have cause to lament in too many in these

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these days. It is not from any thing weak or wanting in our religion, to support and enable it to look the strongest arguments, and the severest and most controuling reason, in the face: but men are atheistical, because they are first vicious; and question the truth of christianity, because they hate the practice: and therefore, that they may seem to have some pretence and colour to sin on freely, and to surrender up themselves wholly to their sensuality, without any imputation upon their judgment, and to quit their *morals*, without any discredit to their *intellectuals*; they fly to several stale, trite, pitiful objections and cavils, some against religion in general, and some against christianity in particular, and some against the very first principles of morality, to give them some poor credit and countenance in the pursuit of their brutish courses.

Few practical errors in the world are embraced upon the stock of conviction, but inclination: for, tho' indeed the judgment may err upon the account of weakness, yet where there is one error that enters in at this door, ten are let into it thro' the will; *that*, for the most part, being set upon those things, which truth is a direct obstacle to the enjoyment of; and where both cannot be had, a man will be sure to buy his enjoyment, tho' he pays down

truth for the purchase. For, in this case, the farther *from truth*, the farther *from trouble*; since truth shews such an one, what he is unwilling to see, and tells him what he hates to hear. They are the same beams that shine and enlighten, and are apt to scorch too: And it is impossible for a man engaged in any wicked way, to have a clear understanding of it, and a quiet mind in it, together.

But these sons of *Epicurus*, both for voluptuousness, and ireligion also, (as it is hard to support the former without the latter) these, I say, rest not here; but (if you will take them at their word) they must also pass for the only wits of the age: Though greater arguments, I am sure, may be produced against this, than any they can alledge against the most improbable article of christianity. But heretofore the rate and standard of wit was very different from what it is now-a-days. No man was then accounted a wit, for speaking such things as deserved to have the tongue cut out that spake them: Nor did any man pass for a philosopher, or a man of depth, for talking atheistically; or a man of parts, for employing them against that God that gave them. For then, the world was generally better inclined; virtue was in so much reputation, as to be pretended to at least. And virtue, whether
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in a christian, or an infidel, can have no interest to be served either by atheism or infidelity.

For which cause, could we but prevail with the greatest debauchees amongst us to change their lives, we should find it no very hard matter to change their judgments. For notwithstanding all their talk of reason and philosophy, which (God knows) they are deplorably strangers to ; and those unanswerable doubts and difficulties, which, over their cups or their coffee, they pretend to have against christianity : persuade but the covetous man not to deify his money ; the proud man not to adore himself ; the lascivious man to throw off his lewd amours ; the intemperate man to abandon his revels ; and so for any other vice, that is apt to abuse and pervert the mind of man ; and I dare undertake, that all their giant-like objections against christian religion shall presently vanish and quit the field. For he that is a good man, is three quarters of his way towards the being a good christian, wheresoever *he lives*, or whatsoever he is called.

2. In the next place, we learn from hence the most effectual way and means of proficiency and growth in the *knowledge* of the great and profound truths of religion, and how to make us all not only good christians, but also expert divines. It is a knowledge, that men are not

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so much to study, as to live themselves into : A knowledge that passes into the head through the heart. I have heard of some, that in their latter years, through the feebleness of their limbs, have been forced to study upon their knees : And I think it might well become the youngest and the strongest to do so too. Let them daily and incessantly pray to God for his grace ; and if God gives grace, they may be sure that knowledge will not stay long behind ; since it is the same spirit and principle that purifies the heart, and clarifies the understanding. Let all their enquiries into the deep and mysterious points of theology be begun and carried on with fervent petitions to God, that he would dispose their minds to direct all their skill and knowledge to the promotion of a good life, both in themselves and others ; that he would use all their noblest speculations, and most refined notions, only as instruments, to move and set awork the great principles of actions, the will, and the affections ; that he would convince them of the infinite vanity and uselessness of all that learning, that makes not the possessor of it a better man ; that he would keep them from those sins, that may grieve and provoke his Holy Spirit, (the *Fountain of all true light and knowledge*) to withdraw from them, and to seal them up under darkness, blind-

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blindness, and stupidity of mind. For where the heart is bent upon, and held under the power of any vicious course, though Christ himself should take the contrary virtue for his doctrine, and do a miracle before such an one's eyes, for its *application*, yet he would not practically gain his assent, but the Result of all would end in a *Non persuadebis etiam si persuaseris*. Few consider what a degree of sottishness and confirm'd ignorance men may sin themselves into.

This was the case of the *Pharisees*. And no doubt but this very consideration also gives us the true reason, and full explication of that notable and strange passage of scripture, in *Luke xvi.* and the last *verse*, that *if men will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*. That is, where a strong, inveterate love of sin has made any doctrine or proposition wholly unsuitable to the heart ; no argument, or demonstration, no nor miracle whatsoever, shall be able to bring the heart cordially to close with, and receive it. Whereas, on the contrary, if the heart be piously disposed, the natural goodness of any doctrine is enough to vouch for the truth of it : For the suitableness of it will endear it to the will ; and, by endearing it to the will, will naturally slide it into the assent also. For

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in morals, as well as in metaphysics, there is nothing really good, but has a *truth* commensurate to its *goodness*.

The truths of Christ crucified, are the christian's *philosophy*; and a good life, is the christian's *logick*; that great instrumental, inductive art that must guide the mind into the former. And where a long course of piety, and close communion with God, has purged the heart, and rectified the will, and made all things ready for the reception of God's Spirit; knowledge will break in upon such a soul, like the sun shining in his full might, with such a victorious light, that nothing shall be able to resist it.

If now, at length, some should object here, that, from what has been delivered, it will follow, that the *most pious men* are still *the most knowing*, which yet seems contrary to common experience and observation; I answer, That as to all things directly conducing, and necessary to salvation, there is no doubt but they are so; as the meanest common soldier, that has fought often in an army, has a truer and better knowledge of war, than he that has read and writ whole volumes of it, but never was in any battle.

Practical sciences are not to be learn'd but in the way of action. It is experience that must

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must give knowledge in the christian profession, as well as in all others. And the knowledge drawn from experience, is quite of another kind from that which flows from speculation, or discourse. It is not the *opinion*, but the *path of the just*, that the wisest of men tells us, *shines more and more unto a perfect day*. The obedient, and the men of practice, are *those sons of light*, that shall out-grow all their doubts and ignorances, that shall *ride upon these clouds*, and triumph over their present imperfections, 'till persuasion pass into knowledge, and knowledge advance into assurance, and all come at length to be compleated in the *beatifick vision*, and a *full fruition* of those joys, which God has in reserve for them, whom by his *grace* he shall prepare for *glory*.

To which GOD, infinitely wise, holy, and just, be render'd and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

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G O D's peculiar Regard to Places set
apart for Divine Worship.

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S E R M O N

Preached at the

Consecration of a Chapel.

1667.

P R E F A C E.

*AFTER the happy expiration of those times,
which had reformed so many churches to the
ground, and in which men used to express their
honour to God, and their allegiance to their
prince the same way, demolishing the palaces of
the one, and the temples of the other ; it is now
our glory and felicity, that God has changed
mens tempers with the times, and made a spirit
of*

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of building succeed a spirit of pulling down : By a miraculous revolution, reducing many from the head of a triumphant rebellion, to their old condition of masons, smiths, and carpenters, that in this capacity they might repair what as colonels and captains, they had ruined and defaced.

But still it is strange to see any ecclesiastical pile, not by ecclesiastical cost and influence, rising above ground ; especially in an age, in which mens mouths are open against the church, but their hands shut towards it ; an age in which, respecting the generality of men, we might as soon expect stones to be made bread, as to be made churches.

But the more epidemical and prevailing this evil is, the more honourable are those who stand and shine as exceptions from the common practice : And may such places, built for the divine worship, derive an honour and a blessing upon the head of the builders, as great and lasting, as the curse and infamy that never fails to rest upon the sacrilegious violators of them ; and a greater, I am sure I need not, I cannot wish.

SERMON VII.

GOD's peculiar Regard to Places set
apart for Divine Worship.

PSALM lxxxvii. 2.

*God hath loved the gates of Sion, more
than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

THE comparison here exhibited between the love God bore to *Sion*, the great place of his solemn worship, and that which he bore to the other dwellings of *Israel*, imports, as all other comparisons do in the superior part of them, two things; *difference*, and *pre-eminence*: And accordingly, I cannot more commodiously and naturally contrive the prosecution of these words, than by casting the sense of them into these two propositions:

I. That God bears a different respect to places set apart, and consecrated to his worship,

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ship, from what he bears to all other places designed to the uses of common life.

II. That God prefers the worship paid him in such places, above that which is offered him in any other places whatsoever.

I. As to the former of these, this difference of respect, borne by God to such places, from what he bears to others, may be evinced these three several ways.

1. By those eminent interposals of providence, both for the erecting, and preserving of such places.

2. By those notable judgments shewn by God upon the violators of them.

3. Lastly, By declaring the ground and reason, why God shews such a different respect to those places, from what he manifests to others. Of all which in their order.

1. First of all then ; Those eminent interposals of the divine Providence for the erecting and preserving such places, will be one pregnant and strong argument to prove the difference of God's respect to them, and to others of common use.

That Providence that universally casts its eye over all the parts of the creation, is yet pleased more particularly to fasten it upon some. God made all the world, that he might be worshipped in some parts of the world : and there-

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therefore, in the first and most early times of the church, what care did he manifest, to have such places erected to his honour? *Jacob* he admonished by a vision, as by a messenger from heaven, to build him an altar; and then, what awe did *Jacob* express to it? *How dreadful* (says he) *is this place! for surely it is no other than the house of God.* What particular inspirations were there upon *Aboliab*, to fit him to work about the sanctuary? The Spirit of God was the Surveyor, Director, and Manager of the whole business. But, above all, how exact, and (as we may say with reverence) how nice was God about the building of the temple? *David*, though a man of most intimate converse and acquaintance with God, and one who bore a kingly pre-eminence over others, no less in point of piety than of majesty, after he had made such rich, such vast, and almost incredible provision of materials for the building of the temple; yet, because he had dipt his hands in blood, though but the blood of God's enemies, had the glory of that work took out of them, and was not permitted to lay a stone in that sacred pile; but the whole work was intirely reserved for *Solomon*, a prince adorned with those parts of mind, and exalted by such a concurrence of all prosperous events to make him glorious and

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magnificent; as if God had made it his business to build a *Solomon*, that *Solomon* might build him an house. To which, had not God bore a very different respect from what he bore to all other places, why might not *David* have been permitted to build God a temple, as well as to rear himself a palace? Why might not he, who was so pious as to design, be also so prosperous as to finish it? God must needs have set a more than ordinary esteem upon that, which *David*, the man after his own heart, the darling of heaven, and the most flaming example of a vigorous love to God that ever was, was not thought fit to have an hand in it.

As, to proceed, when after a long tract of time, the sins of *Israel* had even unconsecrated and prophaned that sacred edifice, and thereby robbed it of its only defence, the *palladium* of God's presence, so that the *Assyrians* laid it even with the ground; yet, after that a long captivity and affliction had made the *Jews* fit again for so great a privilege as a publick place to worship God in, how did God put it into the heart, even of an heathen prince, to promote the building of a second temple! How was the work undertook and carried on amidst all the unlikelihoods and discouraging circumstances imaginable! the builders holding the sword

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bited, and *Herod* permitted to build God a temple, might seem strange, did not the absoluteness of God's good pleasure satisfy all sober minds of the reasonableness of God's proceedings, tho' never so strange and unaccountable.

Add to all this, that the extraordinary manifestations of God's presence were still in the sanctuary : The *cloud*, the *urim* and *thummim*, and the oracular answers of God, were graces and prerogatives proper and peculiar to the sacredness of this place ; these were the dignities that made it (as it were) the presence-chamber of the Almighty, the room of audience, where he declared that he would receive and answer petitions from all places under heaven, and where he display'd his royalty and glory : There was no parlour or dining-room in all the dwellings of *Jacob*, that he vouchsafed the like privileges to. And moreover, how full are God's expressions to this purpose ! *Here have I placed my name, and here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*

But to evidence how different a respect God bears to things consecrated to his own worship, from what he bears to all other things, let that one eminent passage of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* be proof beyond all exception ; in which, the censers of those wretches, who, I am sure, could derive no sanctity to them from their own persons ;

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persons; yet, upon this account, that they had been consecrated by the offering incense in them, were, by God's special command, sequestred from all common use, and appointed to be beaten into broad plates, and fasten'd as a covering upon the altar, *Numb. xvi. 28.* *The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the Lord; therefore they are hallowed.* It seems this one single use left such an indelible sacredness upon them, that neither the villainy of the persons, nor the impiety of the design, could be a sufficient reason to unhallow and degrade them to the same common use that other vessels may be applied to. And the argument holds equally good for the consecration of places. The apostle would have no revelling or junketting upon the altar, which had been used, and, by that use, consecrated to the celebration of a more spiritual and divine repast: *Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God?* says St. Paul, *1 Cor. xi. 22.* It would have been no answer to have told the apostle; What! Is not the church stone and wood, as well as other buildings? And is there any such peculiar sanctity in this parcel of brick and mortar? And must God, who has declared himself *no respecter of*

R 3 *persons,*

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persons, be now made a *respector of places*? No, this is the language of a more spiritualized and refined piety than the apostles and primitive christians were acquainted with. And thus much for the first argument brought to prove the different respect that God bears to things and places consecrated and set apart to his own worship, from what he bears to others.

2. The second argument for the proof of the same assertion, shall be taken from those remarkable judgments shewn by God, upon the violators of things consecrated and set apart to holy uses.

A coal (we know) snatch'd from the altar, once fired the nest of the eagle, the royal and commanding bird; and so has sacrilege consumed the families of princes, broke sceptres, and destroyed kingdoms. We read how the victorious *Philistines* were worsted by the captivated ark, which foraged their country more than a conquering army; they were not able to cohabit with that holy thing; it was like a plague in their bowels, and a curse in the midst of them; so that they were forced to restore their prey, and to turn their triumphs into supplications. Poor *Uzzah*, for but touching the ark, though out of care and zeal for its preservation, was struck dead with a blow from heaven:

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heaven : He had no right to touch it ; and therefore his very zeal was a sin, and his care an usurpation ; nor could the purpose of his heart excuse the error of his hand. Nay, in the promulgation of the *Mosaick* law, if so much as a brute beast touch'd the mountain, the bow of vengeance was ready, and it was to be struck through with a dart, and to die a sacrifice for a fault it could not understand.

But to give some higher and clearer instances of the divine judgments upon sacrilegious persons : In *1 Kings* xiv. 26. we find *Shishak* king of *Egypt* spoiling and robbing *Solomon's* temple ; and that we may know what became of him, we must take notice that *Josephus* calls him *Susac*, and tells us that *Herodotus* calls him *Sesostris* ; and withal reports, that immediately after his return from this very expedition, such disastrous calamities befel his family, that he burnt two of his children himself ; that his brother conspired against him ; and, lastly, that his son who succeeded him, was struck blind, yet not so blind (in his understanding at least) but that he saw the cause of all these mischiefs ; and therefore, to redeem his father's sacrilege, gave more and richer things to temples, than his father had stoln from them : Though (by the way) it may seem to be a strange method of repairing an

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injury done to the true God, by adorning the temples of the false. See the same sad effect of sacrilege in the great *Nebuchadnezzar* ; he plunders the temple of God, and we find the fatal doom that afterwards befel him ; he lost his kingdom, and, by a new unheard-of judgment, was driven from the society and converse of men, to table with the beasts, and to graze with oxen ; the impiety and inhumanity of his sin making him a fitter companion for them, than for those to whom religion is more natural than reason itself. And since it was his unhappiness to transmit his sin, together with his kingdom, to his son, while *Belsazzar* was quaffing in the sacred vessels of the temple, which, in his pride, he sent for to abuse with his impious sensuality, he sees his fatal sentence writ by the finger of God, in the very midst of his prophane mirth : And he stays not long for the execution of it, that very night losing his kingdom, and his life too. And that which makes the story direct for our purpose, is, that all this comes upon him for prophaning those sacred vessels : God himself tells us so much by the mouth of his prophet, in *Dan. v. 23.* where this only sin is charged upon him, and particularly made the cause of his sudden and utter ruin.

These

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These were violators of the first temple ; and those that prophaned and abused the second sped no better : And for this, take, for instance, that first-born of sin and sacrilege, *Antiochus* ; the story of whose prophaning God's house you may read in the first book of *Maccabees*, chap. i. And you may read also at large what success he found after it, in the sixth chapter, where the author tells us, that he never prospered afterwards in any thing, but all his designs were frustrated, his captains slain, his armies defeated ; and, lastly, himself falls sick, and dies a miserable death : And (which is most considerable as to the present business) when all these evils beset him, his own conscience tells him, that it was even for this, that he had most sacrilegiously pillaged and invaded God's house, 1 *Maccab.* vi. 12, 13. *Now I remember (says he) the evils I did at Jerusalem, how I took the vessels of gold and silver ; I perceive therefore, that for this cause these evils are come upon me ; and behold, I perish for grief in a strange land.* The sinner's conscience is, for the most part, the best expositor of the mind of God, under any judgment or affliction.

Take another notable instance in *Nicanor*, who purposed and threaten'd to burn the temple, 1 *Maccab.* vii. 35. and a curse lights upon

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upon him presently after ; his great army is utterly ruined, he himself slain in it, and his head and right hand cut off, and hung up before *Jerusalem*. Where two things are remarkable in the text : 1. That he himself was first slain ; a thing that does not usually befall a general of an army. 2. That the *Jews* prayed against him to God, and desired God to destroy *Nicanor*, for the injury done to his sanctuary only, naming no sin else. And God ratified their prayers, by the judgment they brought down upon the head of him, whom they prayed against. God stopped his blasphemous mouth, and cut off his sacrilegious hand ; and made them teach the world, what it was for the most potent sinner under heaven, to threaten the Almighty God, especially in his own house, for so was the temple.

But now, lest some should puff at these instances, as being such as were under a different œconomy of religion, in which God was more tender of the shell, and ceremonious part of his worship, and consequently not directly pertinent to ours ; therefore, to shew that all prophanation and invasion of things sacred, is an offence against the eternal law of nature, and not against any positive institution after a time to expire, we need not go many nations off, nor many ages back, to see the vengeance of

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of God upon some families, raised upon the ruins of churches, and enriched with the spoils of sacrilege, gilded with the name of reformation : And, for the most part, so unhappy have been the purchasers of church-lands, that the world is not now to seek for an argument, from a long experience, to convince it, that though in such purchases, men have usually the cheapest penny-worths, yet they have not always the best bargains ; for the holy thing has stuck fast to their sides like a fatal shaft, and the stone has cried out of the consecrated walls they have lived within, for a judgment upon the head of the sacrilegious intruder ; and heaven has heard the cry, and made good the curse. So that when the heir of a blasted family has rose up and promised fair, and perhaps flourished for some time upon the stock of excellent parts, and great favour ; yet, at length, a cross event has certainly met and stopped him in the career of his fortunes, so that he has ever after withered and declined, and, in the end, come to nothing, or to that which is worse : So certainly does that which some call blind superstition, take aim when it shoots a curse at the sacrilegious person. But I shall not engage in the odious task of recounting the families, which this sin has blasted with a curse ; only I shall give one eminent instance

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instance in some persons who had sacrilegiously procured the demolishing of some places consecrated to holy uses.

And for this (to shew the world that Papists can commit sacrilege as freely as they can object it to Protestants) it shall be in that great cardinal and minister of state, *Wolfey*, who obtained leave of pope *Clement* the seventh to demolish forty religious houses; which he did by the service of five men, to whose conduct he committed the effecting of that business; every one of which came to a sad and fatal end: For the pope himself was ever after an unfortunate prince, *Rome* being twice taken and sacked in his reign, himself taken prisoner, and at length dying a miserable death. *Wolfey* (as it is known) incurred a *præmunire*, forfeited his honour, estate, and life, which he ended, some say by poison, but certainly in great calamity.

And for the five men employed by him, two of them quarrelled, one of which was slain, and the other hang'd for it; the third drowned himself in a well; the fourth (tho' rich) came at length to beg his bread; and the fifth was miserably stabbed to death at *Dublin* in *Ireland*.

This was the tragical end of a knot of sacrilegious persons from highest to lowest: The
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consideration of which and the like passages, one would think, should make men keep their fingers off from the church's patrimony, tho' not out of love to the church, (which few men have) yet at least out of love to themselves, which (I suppose) few want.

Nor is that instance in one of another religion to be passed over, (so near it is to the former passage of *Nicanor*) of a commander in the parliament's rebel-army, who coming to rifle and deface the *cathedral* at *Litchfield*, solemnly, at the head of his troops, begg'd of God to shew some remarkable token of his approbation, or dislike, of the work they were going about. Immediately after which, looking out at a window, he was shot in the forehead by a deaf and dumb man : And this was on *St. Chadd's* day, the name of which saint that church bore, being dedicated to God in memory of the same. Where we see, that as he asked of God a *sign*, so God gave him one, signing him in the forehead, and that with such a mark, as he is like to be known by to all posterity.

There is nothing that the united voice of all history proclaims so loud, as the certain unfailing curse, that has pursued and overtook sacrilege. Make a catalogue of all the prosperous sacrilegious persons that have been from the beginning of the world to this day,
and

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and I believe they will come within a very narrow compass, and be repeated much sooner than the alphabet.

Religion claims a great interest in the world, even as great as its object God, and the souls of men. And since God has resolved not to alter the course of nature, and upon principles of nature, religion will scarce be supported without the encouragement of the ministers of it; Providence, where it loves a nation, concerns itself to own and assert the interest of religion, by blasting the spoilers of religious persons and places. Many have gaped at the church revenues; but, before they could swallow them, have had their mouths stopped in the church-yard.

And thus much for the second argument, to prove the different respect that God bears to things consecrated to holy uses; namely, his signal judgments upon the sacrilegious violators of them.

3. I descend now to the third and last thing proposed for the proof of the first proposition, which is, to assign the ground and reason, why God shews such a concern for these things. Touching which we are to observe, (1.) Negatively, that it is no worth or sanctity naturally inherent in the things themselves, that either does or can procure them this esteem
from

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from God; for by nature all things have an equally common use. Nature freely and indifferently opens the bosom of the universe to all mankind; and the very *sanctum sanctorum* had originally no more sacredness in it, than the valley of the son of *Hinnom*, or any other place in *Judaea*. (2.) Positively therefore, the sole ground and reason of this different esteem vouchsafed by God to consecrated things and places, is this, That He has the sole property of them.

It is a known maxim, that *in Deo sunt jura omnia*; and consequently, that he is the Proprietor of all things, by that grand and transcendent right founded upon creation. Yet notwithstanding, he may be said to have a greater (because a sole) property in some things; for that he permits not the use of them to men, to whom yet he has granted the free use of all other things. Now this property may be founded upon a double ground.

First, God's own fixing upon, and institution of a place or thing to his peculiar use. When he shall say to the sons of men, as he spake to *Adam* concerning the forbidden fruit, Of all things and places that I have enrich'd the universe with, you may freely make use for your own occasions; but as for this spot of ground, this person, this thing, I have selected
and

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and appropriated, I have inclosed it to Myself, and my own use ; and I will endure no sharer, no rival or companion in it : he that invades them, usurps, and shall bear the guilt of his usurpation. Now, upon this account, the gates of *Sion*, and the tribe of *Levi* became God's property. He laid his hand upon them, and said, *These are mine.*

Secondly, The other ground of God's sole property in any thing or place, is the gift, or rather the return of it made by man to God ; by which act he relinquishes, and delivers back to God, all his right to the use of that thing, which before had been freely granted him by God. After which donation, there is an absolute change and alienation made of the property of the thing given, and that as to the use of it too ; which being so alienated, a man has no more to do with it, than with a thing bought with another's money, or got with the sweat of another's brow.

And this is the ground of God's sole property in things, persons, and places, now under the gospel. Men by free-gift consign over a place to the divine worship, and thereby have no more right to apply it to another use, than they have to make use of another man's goods. He that has devoted himself to the service of God in the christian priesthood, has
given

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given himself to God, and so can no more dispose of himself in another employment, than he can dispose of a thing that he has sold, or freely given away. Now in passing a thing away to another by deed of gift, two things are required:

1. A surrender on the giver's part, of all the property and right he has in the thing given. And to the making of a thing or place sacred, this surrender of it by its right owner is so necessary, that all the rites of consecration, used upon a place against the owner's will, and without his giving up his property, make not that place sacred, forasmuch as the property of it is not hereby altered; and therefore says the canonist, *Qui sine voluntate Domini consecrat, revera desecrat.* The like judgment passed that learned bishop *Synesius* upon a place so consecrated: Οὐδ' ἱερόν, εἰ μὴ ὁσίον ἡγῶμαι. *I account it not* (says he) *for any holy thing.*

For we must know, that consecration makes not a place sacred, any more than coronation makes a king; but only solemnly declares it so. It is the gift of the owner of it to God, which makes it to be solely God's, and consequently sacred; after which, every violation of it is as really sacrilege, as to conspire against the king is treason before the solemnity of his coronation. And moreover, as consecration makes not a thing

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sacred without the owner's gift, so the owner's gift of itself alone makes a thing sacred without the ceremonies of consecration: for we know, that tythes, and lands given to God, are never, and plate, vestments, and other sacred utensils are seldom consecrated; yet certain it is, that after the donation of them to the church, it is as really sacrilege to steal, or alienate them from those sacred uses, to which they were dedicated by the donors, as it is to pull down a church, or turn it into a stable.

2. As, in order to the passing away a thing by gift, there is required a surrender of all right to it on his part that gives, so there is required also an acceptation of it on his part to whom it is given: for giving being a relative action, (and so requiring a correlative to answer it) giving on one part transfers no property, unless there be an accepting on the other; for as *volenti non fit injuria*, so, in this case, *volenti non fit beneficium*.

And if it be now asked, How God can be said to accept what we give, since we are not able to transact with him in person; to this I answer, 1. That we may and do converse with God in Person really, and to all the purposes of giving and receiving, tho' not visibly: for natural reason will evince, that God will receive testimonies of honour from his creatures;
amongst

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amongst which, the homage of offerings, and the parting with a right, is a very great one. And where a gift is suitable to the person to whom it is offered, and no refusal of it testified; silence in that case (even amongst those who transact visibly and corporally with one another) is, by the general voice of reason, reputed an acceptance: and therefore much more ought we to conclude that God accepts of a thing suitable for him to receive, and for us to give, where he does not declare his refusal and disallowance of it. But, 2. I add farther, That we may transact with God in the person of his and Christ's substitute, the bishop, to whom the deed of gift ought, and uses to be delivered by the owner of the thing given, in a formal instrument, signed, sealed, and legally attested by witnesses, wherein he resigns up all his right and property in the thing to be consecrated: and the bishop is as really *vicarius Christi* to receive this from us in Christ's behalf, as the *levitical* priest was *vicarius Dei* to the *Jews* to manage all transactions between God and them.

These two things therefore concurring, the gift of the owner, and God's acceptance of it, either immediately by himself, which we rationally presume, or mediately by the hand of the bishop, which is visibly done before us,

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is that which vests the sole property of a thing or place in God. If it be now asked, Of what use then is consecration, if a thing were sacred before it? I answer, Of very much; even as much as coronation to a king, which confers no royal authority upon him, but, by so solemn a declaration of it, imprints a deeper awe and reverence of it in the people's minds, a thing surely of no small moment. And, 2. The bishop's solemn benediction and prayers to God for a blessing upon those, who shall seek him in such sacred places, cannot but be supposed a direct and most effectual means to procure a blessing from God upon those persons who shall address themselves to him there, as they ought to do. And surely, this also vouches the great reason of the episcopal consecration. Add to this, in the 3d place, That all who ever had any awful sense of religion, and religious matters, (whether *Jews* or *Christians*, or even *Heathens* themselves) have ever used solemn dedications and consecrations of things set apart and designed for divine worship; which surely could never have been so universally practised, had not right reason dictated the high expediency and great use of such practices.

Eusebius (the earliest church-historian) in the tenth book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, as
also

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also in the *Life of Constantine*, speaks of these consecrations of churches, as of things generally in use, and withal sets down those actions particularly of which they consisted, stiling them *θεωρεπείς ἐκκλησίας διαμῆς*, *laws or customs of the church becoming God*. What the *Greek* and *Latin* churches used to do, may be seen in their Pontificals, containing the set forms for these consecrations; tho' indeed (for these six or seven last centuries) full of many tedious, superfluous, and ridiculous fopperies; setting aside all which, if also our liturgy had a set form for the consecration of places, as it has of persons, perhaps it would be never the less perfect. Now, from what has been above discoursed of the ground of God's sole property in things set apart for his service, we come at length to see how all things given to the church, whether houses, or lands, or tythes, belong to church-men; they are but *usufructuarii*, and have only the use of these things, the property and fee remaining wholly in God; and consequently, the alienating of them, is a robbing of God: *Mal. iii. 8, 9. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation, in tythes and offerings.* If it was God that was robbed, it was God also that was the owner of what was took away in the robbery; even our

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own common law speaks as much : For so says our *Magna Charta*, in the first chapter, *Concessimus Deo — quod ecclesia Anglicana libera erit, &c.* Upon which words, that great lawyer, in his *Institutes*, comments thus :
 “ When any thing is granted *for God*, it is
 “ deemed, in law, to be granted *to God* ;
 “ and whatsoever is granted to the church for
 “ his honour, and the maintenance of his
 “ service, is granted *for* and *to God*. ”

The same also appears from those forms of expression, in which the donation of sacred things usually ran : As, *Deo omnipotenti hac præsentē charta donavimus*, with the like. But most undeniably is this proved by this one argument : That in case a bishop should commit treason, or felony, and thereby forfeit his estate, with his life ; yet the lands of his bishoprick become not forfeit, but remain still in the church, and pass intire to his successor : which sufficiently shews that they were none of his.

It being therefore thus proved, that God is the sole proprietor of all sacred things, or places ; I suppose his peculiar property in them, is an abundantly pregnant reason of that different respect that he bears to them. For, is not the *meum*, and the separate property of a thing, the great cause of its endearment

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ment amongst all mankind? Does any one respect a common, as much as he does his garden? or the gold that lies in the bowels of a mine, as much as that which he has in his purse?

I have now finished the first proposition drawn from the words; namely, *That God bears a different respect to places set apart and consecrated to his worship, from what he bears to all other places designed to the uses of common life*: and also shewn the reason why he does so. I proceed now to the II^d proposition; which is, *That God prefers the worship paid him in such places, above that which is offered him in any other places whatsoever*; and that for these reasons:

1. Because such places are naturally apt to excite a greater reverence and devotion in the discharge of divine service, than places of common use. The place properly reminds a man of the business of the place, and strikes a kind of awe into the thoughts, when they reflect upon that great and sacred Majesty they use to treat and converse with there: they find the same holy consternation upon themselves, that *Jacob* did at his consecrated *Bethel*, which he called *the gate of heaven*: and if such places are so, then surely a daily expectation

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at the gate, is the readiest way to gain admittance into the house.

It has been the advice of some spiritual persons, that such as were able should set apart some certain place in their dwellings for private devotions only ; which if they constantly performed there, and nothing else, their very entrance into it would tell them what they were to do in it, and quickly make their chamber-thoughts their table-thoughts, and their jolly, worldly, but much more their sinful thoughts and purposes, fly out of their hearts.

For is there any man (whose heart has not shook off all sense of what is sacred) who finds himself no otherwise affected, when he enters into a church, than when he enters into his parlour, or chamber ? If he does, for ought I know, he is fitter to be there always, than in a church.

The mind of man, even in spirituals, acts with a corporeal dependence, and so is help'd, or hinder'd, in its operations, according to the different quality of external objects that incur into the senses : and perhaps, sometimes, the sight of the altar, and those decent preparations for the work of devotion, may compose and recover the wandering mind much more effectually

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effectually than a sermon, or a rational discourse ; for these things, in a manner, preach to the eye, when the ear is dull, and will not hear ; and the eye dictates to the imagination, and that at last moves the affections. And if these little impulses set the great wheels of devotion on work, the largeness and height of that, shall not at all be prejudiced by the smallness of its occasion. If the fire burns bright and vigorously, it's no matter by what means it was at first kindled ; there is the same force, and the same refreshing virtue in it, kindled by a spark from a flint, as if it were kindled by a beam from the sun.

I am far from thinking that these external things are either parts of our devotion, or, by any strength in themselves, direct causes of it ; but the grace of God is pleased to move us by ways suitable to our nature, and to sanctify these sensible inferior helps to greater and higher purposes : and, since God has placed the soul in a body, where it receives all things by the ministry of the outward senses, he would have us secure these *cinq-ports* (as I may so call them) against the invasion of vain thoughts, by suggesting to them such objects as may prepossess them with the contrary. For God knows how hard a lesson devotion is, if the senses prompt one thing, when the heart
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is to utter another. And therefore let no man presume to think, that he may present God with as acceptable a prayer in his shop, and much less in an ale-house, or a tavern, as he may in a church, or in his closet: unless he can rationally promise himself, (which is impossible) that he shall find the same devout motions and impresses upon his spirit there, that he may here.

What says *David*, in *psal. lxxvii. 13. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary?* It is no doubt, but that holy person continued a strict and most pious communion with God, during his wanderings upon the mountains, and in the wilderness; but still he found in himself, that he had not those kindly, warm meltings upon his heart, those raptures and ravishing transports of affection, that he used to have in the fixed and solemn place of God's worship. See the two first verses of the *lxiid psalm*, intituled, *A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.* How emphatically and divinely does every word proclaim the truth that I have been speaking of! *O God, (says he) thou art my God, early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* Much different was his wish
from

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from that of our unconforming zealots now-a-days, which expresses itself in another kind of dialect; as, *When shall I enjoy God, as I used to do at a conventicle? When shall I meet with those blessed breathings, those heavenly hummings and hawings, that I used to hear at a private meeting, and at the end of a table?*

In all our worshippings of God, we return him but what he first gives us; and therefore he prefers the service offered him in the sanctuary, because there he usually vouchsafes more helps to the piously disposed person, for the discharge of it. As we value the same kind of fruit growing under one climate more than under another; because under one it has a directer, and a warmer influence from the sun, than under the other, which gives it both a better flavour, and a greater worth.

And perhaps I should not want a farther argument for the confirmation of the truth discoursed of, if I should appeal to the experience of many in this nation, who having been long bred to the decent way of divine service in the cathedrals of the church of *England*, were afterwards driven into foreign countries, where, tho' they brought with them the same sincerity to church, yet perhaps they could not find the same enlargements and flowings out of spirit,
which

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which they were wont to find here: especially in some countries, where their very religion smelt of the shop; and their ruder and coarser methods of divine service seemed only adapted to the genius of trade, and the designs of parsimony: tho' one would think, that parsimony in God's worship were the worst husbandry in the world, for fear God should proportion his blessings to such devotions.

2. The other reason, why God prefers a worship paid him in places solemnly dedicated and set apart for that purpose, is, because in such places it is a more direct service and testimony of our homage to him. For surely, if I should have something to ask of a great person, it were greater respect to wait upon him with my petition at his own house, than to desire him to come and receive it at mine.

Set places and set hours for divine worship, as much as the laws of necessity and charity permit us to observe them, are but parts of that due reverence that we owe it; for he that is strict in observing these, declares to the world, that he accounts his attendance upon God his greatest and most important business: and surely it is infinitely more reasonable, that we should wait upon God, than God upon us.

We shall still find, that when God was pleased to vouchsafe his people a meeting, he himself
I would

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would prescribe the place. When he commanded *Abraham* to sacrifice his only and beloved *Isaac*, the place of the offering was not left undetermined, and to the offerer's discretion: but in *Gen. xxii. 2.* *Get thee into the land of Moriah, (says God) and offer him for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I shall tell thee of.*

It was part of his sacrifice, not only what he should offer, but where. When we serve God in his own house, his service (as I may so say) leads all our other secular affairs in triumph after it. They are all made to stoop and bend the knee to prayer, as that does to the throne of Grace.

Thrice a year were the *Israelites* from all, even the remotest parts of *Palestine*, to go up to *Jerusalem*, there to worship, and pay their offerings at the temple. The great distance of some places from thence could not excuse the inhabitants from making their appearance there, which the *Mosaic* law exacted as indispensable.

Whether or no they had coaches, to the temple they must go: nor could it excuse them to plead God's Omniscience, that he could equally see and hear them in any place; nor yet their own good-will and intentions, as if the readiness of their mind to go, might, for-
footh,

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footh, warrant their bodies to stay at home. Nor, lastly, could the real danger of leaving their dwellings to go up to the temple, excuse their journey; for they might very plausibly and very rationally have alledged, that during their absence their enemies round about them might take that advantage to invade their land. And therefore, to obviate this fear and exception, which indeed was built upon so good ground, God makes them a promise, which certainly is as remarkable as any in the whole book of God, *Exod. xxxiv. 24. I will cast out the nations before thee, neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in a year.* While they were appearing in God's house, God himself engages to keep and defend theirs, and that by little less than a miracle, putting forth an over-powering work and influence upon the very hearts and wills of men, that when their opportunities should induce, their hearts should not serve them to annoy their neighbours.

For surely a rich land, guardless and undefended, must needs have been a double incitement, and such an one, as might not only admit, but even invite the enemy. It was like a fruitful garden, or a fair vineyard, without an hedge, that quickens the appetite to enjoy so tempting, and withal so easy a prize. But
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the great God, by ruling men's hearts, could by consequence hold their hands, and turn the very desires of interest and nature out of their common channel, to comply with the designs of his worship.

But now, had not God set a very peculiar value upon the service paid him in his temple, surely he would not have thus (as it were) made himself his people's convoy, and exerted a supernatural work to secure them in their passage to it. And therefore that eminent hero in religion, *Daniel*, when in the land of his captivity he used to pay his daily devotions to God, not being able to go to the temple, would at least look towards it, advance to it in wish and desire; and so, in a manner, bring the temple to his prayers, when he could not bring his prayers to that.

And now, what have I to do more, but to wish that all this discourse may have that blessed effect upon us, as to send us both to this, and to all other solemn places of divine worship, with those three excellent ingredients of devotion, *desire, reverence, and confidence?*

1. And first, for *desire*. We should come hither, as to meet God in a place where he loves to meet us, and where (as *Isaac* did to his sons) he gives us blessings with embraces. Many frequent the gates of *Sion*; but is it because

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cause they love them, and not rather because their interest forces them, much against their inclination, to endure them?

Do they hasten to their devotions with that ardor, and quickness of mind, that they would to a lewd play, or a masquerade?

Or do they not rather come hither slowly, sit here uneasily, and depart desirously? All which is but too evident a sign, that men repair to the house of God, not as to a place of fruition, but of task and trouble; not to enjoy, but to afflict themselves.

2. We should come full of *reverence* to such sacred places; and where there are affections of reverence, there will be postures of reverence too. Within consecrated walls, we are more directly under God's eye, who looks thro' and thro' every one that appears before him, and is too jealous a God to be affronted to his face.

3. And lastly; God's peculiar property in such places should give us a *confidence* in our addresses to him here. Reverence and confidence are so far from being inconsistent, that they are the most direct and proper qualifications of a devout and filial approach to God.

For where should we be so confident of a blessing, as in the place and element of blessings; the place where God both promises and
delights

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delights to dispense larger proportions of his favour, even for this purpose, that he may fix a mark of honour upon his sanctuary; and so recommend and endear it to the sons of men, upon the stock of their own interest, as well as his glory; who has declared himself *the High and the Lofty One, that inhabits eternity, and dwells not in houses made with mens hands; yet is pleased to be present in the assemblies of his saints.*

To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now, and for evermore. *Amen.*

*All Contingencies under the Direction
of GOD's Providence.*

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

Westminster-Abbey,

February 22. 1684-5.

PERMANENT

ERMON

Westminster Abbey

SERMON VIII.

All Contingencies under the Direction
of GOD's Providence.

P R O V. xvi. 33.

*The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the
whole Disposing of it is of the Lord.*

I CANNOT think myself engaged, from these words, to discourse of *lots*, as to their nature, use, and allowableness ; and that not only in matters of moment and business, but also of recreation ; which latter is indeed impugned by some, though better defended by others : but I shall fix only upon the design of the words, which seems to be a declaration of a Divine Perfection by a single instance ; a proof of the exactness and universality of God's Providence, from its influence upon a thing, of

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all others, the most casual and fortuitous, such as is the casting of lots.

A lot is properly a casual event, purposely applied to the determination of some doubtful thing.

Some there are, who utterly proscribe the name of *chance*, as a word of impious and prophane signification : And indeed, if it be taken by us in that sense in which it was used by the heathen, so as to make any thing casual in respect of God himself, their exception ought justly to be admitted. But to say a thing is a chance, or casualty, as it relates to second causes, is not prophaneness, but a great truth ; as signifying no more, than that there are some events, besides the knowledge, purpose, expectation and power of second agents : And for this very reason, because they are so, it is the royal prerogative of God himself, to have all these loose, uneven, fickle uncertainties under his disposal.

The subject therefore that from hence we are naturally carried to the consideration of, is the admirable extent of the Divine Providence, in managing the most contingent passages of human affairs ; which that we may the better treat of, we will consider the result of a *lot* :

I. In reference to men.

II. In reference to God.

I. For the first of these, if we consider it as relating to men, who suspend the decision of some dubious case upon it, so we shall find that it naturally implies in it these two things :

1. Something future. 2. Something contingent.

From which two qualifications, these two things also follow :

1. That it is absolutely out of the reach of man's knowledge.

2. That it is equally out of his power.

This is most clear ; for otherwise, why are men, in such cases, doubtful, and concerned, what the issue and result should be ? For no man doubts of what he sees and knows ; nor is solicitous about the event of that which he has in his power, to dispose of to what event he pleases.

The light of man's understanding is but a short, diminutive, contracted light, and looks not beyond the present : He knows nothing future, but as it has some kind of presence in the stable, constant manner of operation belonging to its cause ; by virtue of which, we know, that if the fire continues for

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twenty years, it will certainly burn so long ; and that there will be summer, winter, and harvest, in their respective seasons : But whether God will continue the world 'till to-morrow or no, we cannot know by any certain argument, either from the nature of God, or of the world.

But when we look upon such things as relate to their immediate causes, with a perfect indifference, so that, in respect of them, they equally *may*, or *may not be* ; human reason can then, at the best, but conjecture what *will be*. And in some things, as here, in the casting of lots, a man cannot, upon any ground of reason, bring the event of them so much as under conjecture.

The choice of man's will is indeed uncertain, because in many things free ; but yet there are certain habits and principles in the soul, that have some kind of sway upon it, apt to bias it more one way than another ; so that, upon the proposal of an agreeable object, it may rationally be conjectured, that a man's choice will rather incline him to accept, than to refuse it. But when lots are shuffled together in a *lap*, *urn*, or *pitcher*, or a man blindfold casts a dye, what reason in the world can he have to presume that he shall draw a white stone rather than a black, or throw an ace rather

rather than a *sic* ? Now if these things are thus out of the compass of a man's knowledge, it will unavoidably follow, that they are also out of his power : For no man can govern or command that which he cannot possibly know ; since to dispose of a thing, implies both a knowledge of the thing to be disposed of, and of the end that it is to be disposed of to.

And thus we have seen how a contingent event baffles man's knowledge, and evades his power.

II. Let us now consider the same in respect of God ; and so we shall find that it falls under,

1. A certain knowledge. And,
2. A determining Providence.

1. First of all then, the most casual event of things, as it stands related to God, is comprehended by a certain knowledge. God, by reason of his eternal, infinite, and indivisible nature, is, by one single act of duration, present to all the successive portions of time, and, consequently, to all things successively existing in them : Which eternal, indivisible act of his existence, makes all futures actually present to him ; and it is the presentiality of the object which founds the unerring certainty of his knowledge : For whatsoever is known, is some way or other present ; and that which is present,

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sent, cannot but be known by Him who is Omniscient.

But I shall not insist upon these speculations, which, when they are most refined, serve only to shew, how impossible it is for us to have a clear and explicit notion of that which is infinite. Let it suffice us in general, to acknowledge and adore the vast compass of God's Omniscience, That it is a light shining into every dark corner, ripping up all secrets, and stedfastly grasping the greatest and most slippery uncertainties. As when we see the sun shine upon a river, though the waves of it move and roll this way and that way by the wind; yet, for all their unsettledness, the sun strikes them with a direct and certain beam. Look upon things of the most accidental and mutable nature, accidental in their production, and mutable in their continuance; yet God's prescience of them is as certain in him, as the memory of them is or can be in us: He knows which way the *lot* and the *dye* shall fall, as perfectly as if they were already cast: All futurities are naked before that all-seeing eye, the sight of which is no more hindered by distance of time, than the sight of an angel can be determined by distance of place.

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2. As all contingencies are comprehended by a certain Divine Knowledge, so they are governed by as certain and steady a Providence.

There is no wandering out of the reach of this, no slipping out of the hands of Omnipotence. God's hand is as steady as his eye: And certainly, thus to reduce contingency to method, instability and chance itself to an unfailing rule and order, argues such a mind as is fit to govern the world; and I am sure, nothing less than such an one can.

Now God may be said to bring the greatest casualties under his Providence, upon a two-fold account:

(1.) That he directs them to a certain end.

(2.) Oftentimes to very weighty and great ends.

(1.) And first of all, he directs them to a certain end.

Providence never shoots at rovers: There is an arrow that flies by night, as well as by day; and God is the person that shoots it, who can aim then as well as in the day: Things are not left to an *Æquilibrium*, to hover under an indifference, whether they shall come to pass, or not come to pass; but the whole train of events is laid beforehand, and all proceed by
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the rule and limit of an antecedent decree ; for otherwise, who could manage the affairs of the world, and govern the dependance of one event upon another, if that event happened at random, and was not cast into a certain method and relation to some foregoing purpose to direct it ?

The reason why men are so short and weak in governing, is, because most things fall out to them accidentally, and come not into any compliance with their preconceived ends, but they are forced to comply subsequently, and to strike in with things as they fall out, by postliminious after-applications of them to their purposes, or by framing their purposes to them.

But now there is not the least thing that falls within the cognizance of man, but is directed by the counsel of God : *Not an hair can fall from our head, nor a sparrow to the ground, without the will of our heavenly Father* : such an universal superintendency has the eye and hand of Providence over all, even the most minute and inconsiderable things.

Nay, and sinful actions too are over-ruled to a certain issue ; even that horrid villainy of the crucifixion of our Saviour, was not a thing left to the disposal of chance and uncertainty ; but in *Acts* ii. 23. it is said of him, that *he*
was

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was delivered to the wicked hands of his murderers, by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God : for surely the Son of God could not die by chance, nor the greatest thing that ever came to pass in nature, be left to an undeterminate event. Is it imaginable, that the great means of the world's redemption should rest only in the number of possibilities, and hang so loose in respect of its futurition, as to leave the event in an equal poise, whether ever there should be such a thing or no? Certainly the actions and proceedings of wise men run in a much greater closeness and coherence with one another, than thus to drive at a casual issue, brought under no forecast or design : the pilot must intend some port before he steers his course, or he had as good leave his vessel to the direction of the winds, and the government of the waves.

Those that suspend the purposes of God, and the resolves of an Eternal Mind upon the actions of the creature, and make God first wait and expect what the creature will do, (and then frame his decrees and counsels accordingly) forget that he is the *First Cause* of all things, and discourse most unphilosophically, absurdly, and unsuitably to the nature of an Infinite Being, whose influence in every motion must set the first wheel a-going : He must

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must still be the *First Agent*; and what he does, he must will and intend to do, before he does it; and what he wills and intends once, he willed and intended from all eternity: it being grossly contrary to the very first notions we have of the infinite perfection of the Divine Nature, to state or suppose any new immanent act in God.

The *Stoicks* indeed held a fatality, and a fixed, unalterable course of events; but then they held also, that they fell out by a necessity emergent from, and inherent in the things themselves, which God himself could not alter: so that they subjected God to the fatal chain of causes; whereas they should have resolved the necessity of all inferior events into the free determination of God himself, who executes necessarily, that which he first proposed freely.

In a word, if we allow God to be the Governor of the world, we cannot but grant, that he orders and disposes of all inferior events; and if we allow him to be a wise and a rational Governor, he cannot but direct them to a certain end.

(2.) In the next place, he directs all these appearing casualties, not only to certain, but also to very great ends.

He that created something out of nothing, surely can raise great things out of small, and
bring

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bring all the scattered and disordered passages of affairs into a great, beautiful, and exact frame. Now this over-ruling, directing power of God may be considered,

First, In reference to societies, or united bodies of men.

Secondly, In reference to particular persons.

First : And first, for societies. God and nature do not principally concern themselves in the preservation of particulars, but of kinds and companies : accordingly we must allow Providence to be more intent and solicitous about nations and governments, than about any private interest whatsoever ; upon which account it must needs have a peculiar influence upon the erection, continuance, and dissolution of every society : which great effect it is strange to consider, by what small, inconsiderable means they are oftentimes brought about, and those so wholly undesigned by such as are the immediate visible actors in them : Examples of this we have both in Holy Writ, and also in other stories.

And first, for those of the former sort :

Let us reflect upon that strange and unparalleled story of *Joseph* and his brethren ; a story that seems to be made up of nothing else but chances, and little contingencies, all directed
to

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to mighty ends: For was it not a mere chance that his father *Jacob* should send him to visit his brethren just at that time that the *Ishmaelites* were to pass by that way, and so his unnatural brethren take occasion to sell him to them, and they to carry him into *Egypt*? and then that he should be cast into prison, and thereby brought at length to the knowledge of *Pharaoh* in that unlikely manner that he was? yet by a joint connexion of every one of these casual events, Providence served itself in the preservation of a kingdom from famine, and of the church, then circumscrib'd within the family of *Jacob*: likewise by their sojourning in *Egypt*, he made way for their bondage there; and their bondage, for a glorious deliverance through those prodigious manifestations of the Divine Power, in the several plagues inflicted upon the *Egyptians*. It was hugely accidental, that *Joash* king of *Israel*, being commanded by the prophet to *strike upon the ground*, 2 Kings xiii. should strike no oftner than just three times; and yet we find there, that the fate of a kingdom depended upon it, and that his victories over *Syria* were concluded by that number. It was very casual, that the *Levite* and his concubine should linger so long, as to be forced to take up their lodging at *Gibeah*, as we read in *Judges* xix. and yet we

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we know what a villainy was occasioned by it, and what a civil war that drew after it, almost to the destruction of a whole tribe.

And then for examples out of other histories, to hint a few of them.

Perhaps there is none more remarkable, than that passage about *Alexander* the great, in his famed expedition against *Darius*.

When in his march towards him, chancing to bathe himself in the river *Cydnus*, thro' the excessive coldness of those waters, he fell sick near unto death for three days; during which short space the *Persian* army had advanced itself into the strait passages of *Cilicia*; by which means *Alexander* with his small army was able to equal them under those disadvantages, and to fight and conquer them: whereas, had not this stop been given him by that accidental sickness, his great courage and promptness of mind would, beyond all doubt, have carried him directly forward to the enemy, till he had met him in the vast open plains of *Persia*, where his paucity and small numbers would have been contemptible, and the *Persian* multitudes formidable, and, in all likelihood of reason, victorious. So that this one little accident of that prince's taking a fancy to bathe himself at that time, caused the interruption of his march; and

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that interruption gave occasion to that great victory, that founded the third monarchy of the world. In like manner, how much of casualty was there in the preservation of *Romulus*, as soon as born exposed by his uncle, and took up and nourished by a shepherd? (for the story of the she-wolf is a fable) And yet in that one accident was laid the foundation of the fourth universal monarchy.

How doubtful a case was it, whether *Hannibal*, after the battle of *Cannæ*, should march directly to *Rome*, or divert into *Campania*? Certain it is, that there was more reason for the former; and he was a person that had sometimes the command of reason, as well as regiments: yet his reason deserted his conduct at that time; and by not going to *Rome*, he gave occasion to those recruits of the *Roman* strength, that prevailed to the conquest of his country, and at length to the destruction of *Carthage* itself, one of the most puissant cities in the world.

And, to descend to occurrences within our own nation: How many strange accidents concurred in the whole business of King *Henry* the eighth's divorce! Yet we see Providence directed it and them to an intire change of the affairs and state of the whole kingdom. And surely there could not be a greater chance, than
that

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that which brought to light the powder-treason; when Providence (as it were) snatched a king and kingdom out of the very jaws of death, only by the mistake of a word in the direction of a letter.

But of all cases, in which little casualties produce great and strange effects, the chief is in war; upon the issues of which hangs the fortune of states and kingdoms.

Cæsar, I am sure, whose great sagacity and conduct put his success as much out of the power of chance, as human reason could well do; yet, upon occasion of a notable experiment, that had like to have lost him his whole army at *Dyrrachium*, tells us the power of it in the third book of his commentaries, *de bello civili*:
“ *Fortuna, quæ plurimum potest cum in aliis*
“ *rebus, tum præcipue in bello, in parvis mo-*
“ *mentis magnas rerum mutationes efficit.*” Nay, and a greater than *Cæsar*, even the Spirit of God himself, in *Eccles. vi. 11.* expressly declares, *That the battle is not always to the strong.* So that, upon this account, every warrior may in some sense be said to be a *soldier of fortune*; and the best commanders to have a kind of lottery for their work, as, amongst us, they have for a reward. For how often have whole armies been routed by a little mistake, or a

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sudden fear raised in the soldiers minds upon some trivial ground or occasion?

Sometimes the misunderstanding of a word has scattered and destroyed those who have been even in possession of victory, and wholly turned the fortune of the day. A spark of fire, or an unexpected gust of wind may ruin a navy. And sometimes a false, senseless report has spread so far, and sunk so deep into the people's minds, as to cause a tumult, and that tumult a rebellion, and that rebellion has ended in the subversion of a government.

And in the late War between the king and some of his rebel-subjects, has it not sometimes been at an even cast, whether his army should march this way, or that way? Whereas, had it took that way which actually it did not, things afterwards so fell out, that, in very high probability of reason, it must have met with such success, as would have put an happy issue to that wretched war, and thereby have continued the crown upon that blessed prince's head, and his head upon his shoulders. Upon supposal of which event, most of those sad and strange alterations that have since happened, would have been prevented, the ruin of many honest men hindered, the punishment of many great villains hastened, and the preferment of greater spoiled.

Many

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Many passages happen in the world, much like that *little cloud* in 1 *Kings* xviii. that appeared at first to *Elijah's* servant, *no bigger than a man's hand*; but presently after grew and spread, and blacken'd the face of the whole heaven, and then discharged itself in thunder, and rain, and a mighty tempest. So these accidents, when they first happen, seem but small and contemptible; but by degrees they branch out, and widen themselves into such a numerous train of mischievous consequences, one drawing after it another, by a continued dependence and multiplication, that the plague becomes victorious and universal, and personal miscarriage determines in a national calamity.

For who, that should view the small, despicable beginnings of some things and persons at first, could imagine or prognosticate those vast and stupendous increases of fortune, that have afterwards followed them?

Who, that had look'd upon *Agathocles*, first handling the clay, and making pots under his father, and afterwards turning robber, could have thought, that from such a condition he should come to be king of *Sicily*?

Who, that had seen *Massanello*, a poor fisherman with his red cap, and his angle, could have reckoned it possible to see such a pitiful thing, within a week after, shining in his cloth

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of gold, and with a word, or a nod, absolutely commanding the whole city of *Naples*?

And who, that had beheld such a bankrupt beggarly fellow as CROMWEL, first entering the parliament-house with a threadbare torn cloak, and a greasy hat, (and perhaps neither of them paid for) could have suspected, that in the space of so few years, he should, by the murder of one king, and the banishment of another, ascend the throne, be invested in the royal robes, and want nothing of the state of a king, but the changing of his hat into a crown?

'Tis (as it were) the sport of the Almighty, thus to baffle and confound the sons of men by such events, as both cross the methods of their actings, and surpass the measure of their expectations. For according to both these, men still suppose a gradual natural progress of things; as that from *great*, things and persons should grow *greater*, till at length, by many steps and ascents, they come to be at the *greatest*; not considering, that when Providence designs strange and mighty changes, it gives men wings instead of legs; and instead of climbing leisurely, makes them at once fly to the top and height of greatness and power: so that the world about them (looking up to those illustrious upstarts) scarce knows *who*, or *whence* they *were*, nor they themselves *where* they *are*.

It

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It were infinite to insist upon particular instances; histories are full of them, and experience seals to the truth of history.

In the next place, let us consider, to what great purposes God directs these little casualties, with reference to particular persons, and those either publick or private.

1. And first for publick persons, as princes: Was it not a mere accident, that *Pharaoh's* daughter met with *Moses*? Yet it was a means to bring him up in the *Egyptian* court, then the school of all arts and policy, and so to fit him for that great and arduous employment that God designed him to. For see upon what little hinges that great affair turned; for had either the child been cast out, or *Pharaoh's* daughter come down to the river but an hour sooner or later, or had that little vessel not been cast by the parents, or carried by the water into that very place where it was, in all likelihood the child must have undergone the common lot of the other *Hebrew* children, and been either starved or drowned; or however, not advanced to such a peculiar height and happiness of condition. That *Octavius Cæsar* should shift his tent (which he had never used to do before) just that very night that it happened to be took by the enemy, was a mere casualty; yet such an one, as preserved a person

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who lived to establish a total alteration of government in the imperial city of the world.

But we need not go far for a prince preserved by as strange a series of little contingencies, as ever were managed by the art of Providence to so great a purpose.

There was but an hair's breadth between him and certain destruction, for the space of many days: for had the rebel-forces gone one way, rather than another, or come but a little sooner to his hiding-place, or but mistrusted something which they passed over, (all which things might very easily have happened) we had not seen this face of things at this day; but rebellion had been still enthroned, perjury and cruelty had reigned, majesty had been proscribed, religion extinguished, and both church and state thoroughly reformed and ruined with confusions, massacres, and a total desolation.

On the contrary, when Providence designs judgment or destruction to a prince, nobody knows by what little, unusual, unregarded means the fatal blow shall reach him. If *Ahab* be designed for death, tho' a soldier in the enemies army draws a bow at a venture; yet the sure, unerring directions of Providence shall carry it in a direct course to his heart, and there lodge the revenge of heaven.

An

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An old woman shall cast down a stone from a wall, and God shall send it to the head of *Abimelech*, and so sacrifice a king in the very head of his army.

How many warnings had *Julius Cæsar* of the fatal *ides of March*! Whereupon sometimes he resolved not to go to the senate, and sometimes again he would go; and when at length he did go, in his very passage thither, one put into his hand a note of the whole conspiracy against him, together with all the names of the conspirators, desiring him to read it forthwith, and to remember the giver of it as long as he lived: but continual salutes and addresses entertaining him all the way, kept him from saving so great a life but with one glance of his eye upon the paper; till he came to the fatal place where he was stabbed, and died with the very means of preventing death in his hand.

Henry the second of *France*, by a splinter, unhappily thrust into his eye at a solemn jousting, was dispatched and sent out of the world, by a sad, but very accidental death.

In a word, God has many ways to reap down the grandees of the earth; an arrow, a bullet, a tile, a stone from an house, is enough to do it: and besides all these ways, sometimes,
when

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when he intends to bereave the world of a prince, or an illustrious person, he may cast him upon a bold, self-opinioned physician, worse than his distemper; who shall dose, and bleed, and kill him *secundum artem*, and make a shift to cure him into his grave.

In the last place, we will consider this directing influence of God, with reference to private persons; and that, as touching things of nearest concernment to them. As,

1. Their lives.
2. Their health.
3. Their reputation.
4. Their friendships. And,
5. And lastly, their employments or preferments.

And first for mens lives. Tho' these are things for which nature knows no price or ransom; yet I appeal to universal experience, whether they have not, in many men, hung oftentimes upon a very slender thread, and the distance between them and death been very nice, and the escape wonderful. There have been some, who upon a slight, and perhaps groundless occasion, have gone out of a ship, or house, and the ship has sunk, and the house has fell, immediately after their departure.

He that, in a great wind, suspecting the strength of his house, betook himself to his orchard,

orchard, and walking there, was knocked on the head by a tree, falling thro' the fury of a sudden gust, wanted but the advance of one or two steps, to have put him out of the way of that mortal blow.

He that, being subject to an apoplexy, used still to carry his remedy about him; but upon a time shifting his cloaths, and not taking that with him, chanced upon that very day to be surpris'd with a fit, and to die in it, certainly owed his death to a mere accident, to a little inadvertency and failure of memory. But not to recount too many particulars: may not every foldier, that comes alive out of the battle, pass for a living monument of a benign chance, and an happy providence? For was he not in the nearest neighbourhood to death? And might not the bullet, that perhaps razed his cheek, have as easily gone into his head? and the sword that glanced upon his arm, with a little diversion have found the way to his heart? But the workings of Providence are marvellous, and the methods secret and untraceable, by which it disposes of the lives of men.

In like manner, for mens *health*, it is no less wonderful to consider to what strange casualties many sick persons oftentimes owe their recovery. Perhaps an unusual draught, or morsel, or some accidental violence of motion,
has

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has removed that malady, that for many years has baffled the skill of all physicians. So that, in effect, he is the best physician, that has the best luck; he prescribes, but it is chance that cures.

That person, that (being provoked by excessive pain) thrust his dagger into his body, and thereby, instead of reaching his vitals, opened an impostume, the unknown cause of all his pain, and so stabbed himself into perfect health and ease, surely had great reason to acknowledge chance for his chirurgeon, and Providence for the Guider of his hand.

And then also for mens reputation; and that either in point of wisdom, or of wit; there is hardly any thing, which (for the most part) falls under a greater chance. If a man succeeds in any attempt, tho' undertook with never so much folly and rashness, his success shall vouch him a politician, and good luck shall pass for deep contrivance: for give any one fortune, and he shall be thought a wise man, in spite of his heart; nay, and of his head too. On the contrary, be a design never so artificially laid, and spun in the finest thread of policy, if it chances to be defeated by some cross accident, the man is then run down by an universal vogue: his counsels are derided, his prudence questioned, and his person despised.

Achitophel

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Achitophel was as great an *oracle*, and gave as good counsel to *Absalom*, as ever he had given to *David*; but not having the good luck to be believed, and thereupon losing his former repute, he thought it high time to hang himself. And, on the other side, there have been some, who for several years have been fools with tolerable good reputation, and never discovered themselves to be so, 'till at length they attempted to be knaves also, but wanted art and dexterity.

And as the repute of wisdom, so that of wit also, is very casual. Sometimes a lucky saying, or a pertinent reply, has procured an esteem of wit, to persons otherwise very shallow, and no ways accustomed to utter such things by any standing ability of mind; so that, if such an one should have the ill hap at any time to strike a man dead with a smart saying, it ought, in all reason and conscience, to be judged but a chance-medly; the poor man (God knows) being no ways guilty of any design of wit.

Nay, even where there is a real stock of wit, yet the wittiest sayings and sentences will be found, in a great measure, the issues of chance, and nothing else but so many lucky hits of a roving fancy.

For,

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For, consult the acuteſt poets and ſpeakers, and they will confeſs, that their quickeſt and moſt admired conceptions, were ſuch as darted into their minds like ſudden ſaſhes of lightning, they knew not how, nor whence; and not by any certain conſequence, or dependence of one thought upon another, as it is in matters of ratiocination.

Moreover, ſometimes a man's reputation riſes or falls, as his memory ſerves him in a performance; and yet there is nothing more fickle, ſlippery, and leſs under command, than this faculty: ſo that many having uſed their utmoſt diligence to ſecure a faithful retention of the things or words committed to it, yet, after all, cannot certainly know where it will trip, and fail them: any ſudden diverſion of the ſpirits, or the juſtling in of a tranſient thought, is able to deface thoſe little images of things; and ſo breaking the train that was laid in the mind, to leave a man in the lurch. And for the other part of memory, called reminifcence, which is the retrieving of a thing, at preſent forgot, or but confuſedly remember'd, by ſetting the mind to hunt over all its notions, and to ranſack every little cell of the brain: while it is thus buſied, how accidentally oftentimes does the thing ſought for, offer itſelf to the mind? and by what ſmall, petit hints

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hints does the mind catch hold of, and recover a vanishing notion ?

In short ; though wit and learning are certain and habitual perfections of the mind, yet the declaration of them (which alone brings the repute) is subject to a thousand hazards : so that every wit runs something the same risque with the astrologer, who, if his predictions come to pass, is cry'd up to the *stars*, from whence he pretends to draw them ; but if not, the astrologer himself grows more out of date than his almanack.

And then, in the fourth place, for the friendships or enmities that a man contracts in the world ; than which surely there is nothing that has a more direct and potent influence upon the whole course of a man's life, whether as to happiness, or misery ; yet chance has the ruling stroke in them all.

A man, by mere peradventure, lights into company, possibly is driven into an house by a shower of rain for present shelter, and there begins an acquaintance with a person ; which acquaintance and endearment grows and continues, even when relations fail, and perhaps proves the support of his mind, and of his fortunes, to his dying day.

And the like holds in enmities, which come much more easily than the other. A word
unad-

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unadvisedly spoken on the one side, or misunderstood on the other ; any the least surmise of neglect ; sometimes a bare gesture ; nay, the very unsuitableness of one man's aspect to another man's fancy, has raised such an aversion to him, as, in time, has produced a perfect hatred of him, and that so strong and so tenacious, that it has never left vexing and troubling him, 'till perhaps at length it has worried him to his grave ; yea, and after death too, has pursu'd him in his surviving shadow, exercising the same tyranny upon his very name and memory.

It is hard to please men of some tempers, who indeed hardly know what will please themselves ; and yet, if a man does not please them, which it is ten thousand to one if he does, if they can but have power equal to their malice, (as sometimes to plague the world, God lets them have) such an one must expect all the mischief that power and spite, lighting upon a base mind, can possibly do him.

In the last place : As for mens employments and preferments, every man that sets forth into the world, comes into a great lottery, and draws some one certain profession to act, and live by, but knows not the fortune that will attend him in it.

One

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One man perhaps proves miserable in the study of the law, which might have flourished in that of physick, or divinity : Another runs his head against the pulpit, who might have been very serviceable to his country at the plough : And a third proves a very dull and heavy philosopher, who possibly would have made a good mechanick, and have done well enough at the *useful philosophy* of the *spade*, or the *anvil*.

Now let this man reflect upon the time when all these several callings and professions were equally offered to his choice, and consider how indifferent it was once for him to have fixed upon any one of them, and what *little* accidents and considerations cast the balance of his choice rather one way than the other, and he will find how easily chance may throw a man upon a profession, which all his diligence cannot make him fit for.

And then for the preferments of the world, he that would reckon up all the accidents that they depend upon, may as well undertake to count the sands, or to sum up infinity : so that greatness, as well as an estate, may, upon this account, be properly called a man's *fortune* ; forasmuch as no man can state either the acquisition, or preservation of it upon any certain rules ; every man, as well as the *merchant*,

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being here truly an *Adventurer*: for the ways by which it is obtained are various, and frequently contrary; one man, by sneaking and flattering, comes to riches and honour, (where it is in the power of fools to bestow them); upon observation whereof, another presently thinks to arrive to the same greatness by the very same means; but striving, like the ass, to court his master, just as the spaniel had done before him, instead of being stroked and made much of, he is only rated off and cudgelled for all his courtship.

The source of mens preferments, is most commonly the will, humour, and fancy of persons in power: whereupon, when a prince, or grandee, manifests a liking to such a thing, such an art, or such a pleasure, men generally set about to make themselves considerable for such things, and thereby, through his favour, to advance themselves; and at length, when they have spent their whole time in them, and so are become fit for nothing else, that prince, or grandee, perhaps dies, and another succeeds him, quite of a different disposition, and inclining him to be pleased with quite different things; whereupon these mens hopes, studies, and expectations are wholly at an end. And besides, though the grandee whom they build upon, should not die, or quit the stage, yet the

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the same person does not always like the same things : for age may alter his constitution, humour, or appetite ; or the circumstances of his affairs may put him upon different courses and counsels ; every one of which accidents wholly alters the road to preferment. So that those who travel that road must be (like highway-men) very dexterous in shifting the way upon every turn ; and yet their very doing so, sometimes proves the means of their being found out, understood, and abhorred ; and for this very cause, that they are ready to do any thing, are justly thought fit to be preferr'd to nothing.

Cæsar Borgia (base Son to pope *Alexander VI.*) used to boast to his friend *Machiavel*, that he had contrived his affairs and greatness into such a posture of firmness, that whether his holy father lived or died, they could not but be secure : if he lived, there could be no doubt of them ; and if he died, he laid his interest so, as to over-rule the next election as he pleased. But all this while the politician never thought or considered that he might in the mean time fall dangerously sick, and that sickness necessitate his removal from the court, and, during that his absence, his father die, and so his interest decay, and his mortal enemy be chosen to the papacy, as indeed it fell out :

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so that, for all his exact plot, down was he cast from all his greatness, and forced to end his days in a mean condition ; as it's pity but all such politick opinionators should.

Upon much the like account, we find it once said of an eminent cardinal, by reason of his great and apparent likelihood to step into *St. Peter's* chair, that in two conclaves he went in pope, and came out again cardinal.

So much has chance the casting-voice in the disposal of all the great things of the world : That which men call *merit*, is a mere nothing ; for even when persons of the greatest worth and merit are preferred, it is not their merit, but their fortune, that prefers them. And then, for that other so much admired thing called *policy*, it is but little better ; for when men have busied themselves, and beat their brains never so much, the whole result both of their counsels, and their fortunes, is still at the mercy of an accident : And therefore, whosoever that man was, that said, that he had rather have a grain of fortune, than a pound of wisdom, as to the things of this life, spoke nothing but the voice of wisdom, and great experience.

And now I am far from affirming, that I have recounted all, or indeed the hundredth part of those casualties of human life, that may
display

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display the full compass of Divine Providence ; but surely I have reckon'd up so many as sufficiently inforce the necessity of our reliance upon it, and that in opposition to two extremes that men are usually apt to fall into.

1. Too much confidence and presumption in a prosperous estate. *David*, after his deliverances from *Saul*, and his victories over all his enemies round about him, in *Psal.* xxx. ver. 7, 8. confesses, that this his prosperity had raised him to such a pitch of confidence, as to make him say, *that he should never be moved ; God, of his favour, had made his hill so strong :* but presently he adds, almost in the very same breath, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

The sun shines in his full brightness but the very moment before he passes under a cloud. Who knows what a day, what an hour, nay, what a minute may bring forth ? He who builds upon the present, builds upon the narrow compass of a point ; and where the foundation is so *narrow*, the superstructure cannot be high, and strong too.

Is a man confident of his present health and strength ? Why, an unwholsome blast of air, a cold, or a surfeit took by chance, may shake in pieces his hardy fabrick, and (in spite of all

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his youth and vigour) send him, in the very flower of his years, pining and drooping, to his long home : nay, he cannot, with any assurance, so much as step out of his doors, but (unless God commissions his protecting angel to bear him up in his hands) he may dash his foot against a stone, and fall, and in that fall breathe his last.

Or is a man confident of his estate, wealth, and power? Why, let him read of those strange, unexpected dissolutions of the great monarchies and governments of the world ; governments that once made such a noise, and look'd so big in the eyes of mankind, as being founded upon the deepest counsels, and the strongest force ; and yet, by some slight miscarriage, or cross accident, (which let in ruin and desolation upon them at first) are now so utterly extinct, that nothing remains of them but a name, nor are there the least signs or traces of them to be found, but only in story : When (I say) he shall have well reflected upon all this, let him see what security he can promise himself in his own little personal domestick concerns, which at the best have but the protection of the laws, to guard and defend them, which (God knows) are far from being able to defend themselves.

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No man can rationally account himself secure, unless he could command all the chances of the world : But how should he command them, when he cannot so much as number them ? Possibilities are as infinite as God's power ; and whatsoever may come to pass, no man can certainly conclude shall not come to pass.

People forget how little it is that they know, and how much less it is that they can do, when they grow confident upon any present state of things.

There is no one enjoyment that a man pleases himself in, but is liable to be lost by ten thousand accidents wholly out of all mortal power, either to foresee, or to prevent : Reason allows none to be confident, but Him only who governs the world, who knows all things, and can do all things, and therefore can neither be surprized, nor over-powered.

2. The other extreme, which these considerations should arm the heart of man against, is, utter despondency of mind in a time of pressing adversity.

As he who presumes, steps into the throne of God ; so he that despairs, limits an infinite power to a finite apprehension, and measures Providence by his own little contracted model :

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but the contrivances of heaven are as much above our politicks, as beyond our arithmetick.

Of those many millions of casualties which we are not aware of, there is hardly one but God can make an instrument of our deliverance: and most men, who are at length delivered from any great distress indeed, find that they are so, by ways that they never thought of, ways above or beside their imagination.

And therefore let no man, who owns the belief of a Providence, grow desperate or forlorn, under any calamity or streight whatsoever; but compose the anguish of his thoughts, and rest his amazed spirits, upon this one consideration, that he knows not *which way the lot may fall*, or what may happen to him; he comprehends not those strange unaccountable methods by which Providence may dispose of him.

In a word, to sum up all the foregoing discourse: Since the interest of governments and nations, of princes and private persons, and that both as to *life and health, reputation and honour, friendships and enmities, employments and preferments*, (notwithstanding all the contrivance and power that human nature can exert about them) remain so wholly contingent,

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gent, as to us ; surely all the reason of mankind cannot suggest any solid ground of satisfaction, but in making that God our friend, who is the sole and absolute disposer of all these things ; and in carrying a conscience so clear towards Him, as may encourage us with confidence to cast ourselves upon Him ; and in all casualties still to promise ourselves the best events from his Providence, to whom nothing is casual ; who constantly wills the truest happiness to those that trust in Him, and works all things according to the counsel of that blessed will :

*To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is
most due, all praise, might, majesty, and
dominion, both now, and for evermore.
Amen.*

Of the Wisdom of this World.

A

S E R M O N

Preached at

Westminster-Abbey,

April 30. 1676.

SERMON IX.

The Wisdom of this World.

1 COR. iii. 19.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

THE *wisdom of the world*, so called by an *hebraism*, frequent in the writings of this apostle for *worldly wisdom*, is taken in scripture in a double sense.

1. For that sort of wisdom, that consists in speculation, called (both by St. *Paul*, and the professors of it) *philosophy*; the great idol of the learned part of the heathen world, and which divided it into so many sects and denominations, as *Stoicks*, *Peripateticks*, *Epicureans*, and the like; it was professed and owned by them for the grand rule of life, and certain guide

guide to man's chief happiness. But for its utter insufficiency to make good so high an undertaking, we find it termed by the same apostle, *Col. ii. 8. vain philosophy*; and *1 Tim. vi. 20. science falsely so called*; and a full account of its uselessness we have in this, *1 Cor. i. 21.* where the apostle speaking of it, says, that *the world by wisdom knew not God*. Such a worthy kind of wisdom is it, only making men accurately and laboriously ignorant of what they were most concerned to know.

2. The *wisdom of this world* is sometimes taken in scripture for such a wisdom, as lies in practice, and goes commonly by the name of policy; and consists in a certain dexterity or art of managing business for a man's secular advantage: and so being indeed that ruling engine that governs the world, it both claims and finds as great a pre-eminence above all other kinds of knowledge, as government is above contemplation; or the leading of an army above the making of syllogisms, or managing the little issues of a dispute.

And so much is the very name and reputation of it affected and valued by most men, that they can much rather brook their being reputed *knaves*, than for their honesty be accounted *fools*, as they easily may; knave, in the mean time,

time, passing for a name of credit, where it is only another word for politician.

Now, this is the wisdom here intended in the text; namely, that practical cunning, that shews itself in political matters, and has in it really the mystery of a trade or craft. So that in this latter part of *ver. 19.* God is said to *take the wise in their own craftiness.*

In short, it is a kind of trick or sleight, got not by study, but converse; learned not from books, but men; and those also, for the most part, the very worst of men of all sorts, ways, and professions. So that, if it be in truth such a precious jewel as the world takes it for; yet, as precious as it is, we see that they are forced to rake it out of dunghills; and accordingly, the apostle gives it a value suitable to its extract, branding it with the most degrading, and ignominious imputation of foolishness. Which character running so cross to the general sense and vogue of mankind concerning it; who are still admiring it, and even adoring it, as the mistress and queen regent of all other arts whatsoever; our business, in the following discourse, shall be to inquire into the reason of the apostle's passing so severe a remark upon it: and here indeed, since we must allow it for an art, and since every art is properly an habitual knowledge of certain rules and maxims, by
which

which a man is governed and directed in his actions, the prosecution of the words will most naturally lie in these two things.

I. To shew, what are those rules or principles of action, upon which the policy or wisdom here condemned by the apostle does proceed.

II. To shew and demonstrate the folly and absurdity of them in relation to God, in whose account they receive a very different estimate, from what they have in the world's.

I. And for the first of these; I shall set down four several rules or principles, which that policy or *wisdom*, which carries so great a vogue and value in the world, governs its actions by.

1. The first is, *That a man must maintain a constant continued course of dissimulation in the whole tenor of his behaviour.* Where yet, we must observe, that dissimulation admits of a two-fold acceptance: (1.) It may be taken for a bare concealment of one's mind: in which sense we commonly say, that *it is prudence to dissemble injuries*; that is, not always to declare our resentments of them; and this must be allowed not only lawful, but, in most of the affairs of human life, absolutely necessary: for certainly it can be no man's duty to write his heart upon his forehead, and to give all the inquisitive and malicious world, round about him,

him, a survey of those thoughts, which it is the prerogative of God only to know, and his own great interest to conceal. Nature gives every one a right to defend himself, and silence surely is a very innocent defence.

(2.) Diffimulation is taken for a man's positive professing himself to be, what indeed he is not, and what he resolves not to be: and consequently, it employs all the art and industry imaginable, to make good the disguise; and by false appearances to render its designs the less visible, that so they may prove the more effectual: and this is the diffimulation here meant, which is the very ground-work of all worldly policy. The superstructure of which being folly, it is but reason, that the foundation of it should be falsity.

In the language of the scripture, it is *damnable hypocrisy*; but of those who neither believe scripture nor damnation, it is voted wisdom; nay, the very *primum mobile*, or great wheel, upon which all the various arts of policy move and turn; the soul or spirit, which (as it were) animates and runs thro' all the particular designs and contrivances, by which the great masters of this mysterious wisdom turn about the world. So that he who hates his neighbour mortally, and wisely too, must profess all the dearness and friendship, all the

readiness to serve him, (as the phrase now is) that words and superficial actions can express.

When he purposes one thing, he must swear and lye, and damn himself with ten thousand protestations, that he designs the clean contrary. If he really intends to ruin and murder his prince, as *Cromwel*, an experienced artist in that perfidious and bloody faculty, once did; he must weep, and call upon God, use all the oaths and imprecations, all the sanctified perjuries, to persuade him, that *he resolves nothing but his safety, honour, and establishment*, as the same grand exemplar of hypocrisy did before.

If such persons project the ruin of church and state, they must appeal to God the *Searcher of all hearts*, that they are ready to sacrifice their dearest blood for the peace of the one, and the purity of the other.

And now, if men will be prevailed upon so far, as to renounce the sure and impartial judgments of sense and experience, and to believe that black is white, provided there be somebody to swear that it is so, they shall not want arguments of this sort, good store, to convince them; there being knights of the post, and holy cheats enough in the world, to swear the truth of the broadest contradictions, and the highest impossibilities, where interest
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and pious frauds shall give them an extraordinary call to it.

It is looked upon as a great piece of weakness, and unfitness for business, (forsooth) for a man to be so clear and open, as really to think not only what he says, but what he swears; and when he makes any promise, to have the least intent of performing it; but when his interest serves instead of veracity, and engages him rather to be true to another, than false to himself. He only now-a-days speaks like an oracle, who speaks tricks and ambiguities. Nothing is thought beautiful, that is not painted: so that, what between *French* fashions, and *Italian* dissimulations, the old, generous, *English* spirit, which heretofore made this nation so great in the eyes of all the world round about it, seems utterly lost and extinct; and we are degenerated into a mean, sharking, fallacious, undermining way of converse; there being a snare, and a trapan, almost in every word we hear, and every action we see. Men speak with designs of mischief, and therefore they speak in the dark. In short, this seems to be the true inward judgment of all our politick sages, that speech was given to the *ordinary sort of men*, whereby to communicate their mind; but to wise men, whereby to conceal it.

2. The second rule or principle, upon which this policy, or wisdom of the world, does proceed, is, *That conscience and religion ought to lay no restraint upon men at all, when it lies opposite to the prosecution of their interest.*

The great patron and *Coryphæus* of this tribe, *Nicolas Machiavel*, laid down this for a master-rule, in his political scheme, *that the shew of religion was helpful to the politician, but the reality of it hurtful and pernicious.* Accordingly, having shewn how the former part of his maxim has been followed by these men, in that first and fundamental principle of dissimulation, already spoken to by us ; we come now to shew farther, That they cannot with more art dissemble the appearance of religion, than they can with ease lay aside the substance.

The politician, whose very essence lies in this, that he be a person ready to do any thing that he apprehends for his advantage, must first of all be sure to put himself into a state of liberty, as free and large as his principles, and so to provide elbow-room enough for his conscience to lay about, and have its full play in ; and for that purpose, he must resolve to shake off all inward awe of religion, and by no means to suffer the *liberty of his conscience* to be enslaved, and brought under the bondage

bondage of observing oaths, or the narrowness of mens opinions, about *turpe & honestum*, which ought to vanish, when they stand in competition with any solid, real good ; that is (in their judgment) such as concerns *eating*, or *drinking*, or *taking money*.

Upon which account, these *children of darkness* seem excellently well to imitate the wisdom of those *children of light*, the great *illuminati* of the late times, who professedly laid down this, as the basis of all their proceedings ; *That whatsoever they said or did for the present, under such a measure of light, should oblige them no longer, when a greater measure of light should give them other discoveries.*

And this principle, they professed, was of *great use to them* : as how could it be otherwise, if it fell into skilful hands ? for since this light was to rest within them, and the judgment of it to remain wholly in themselves, they might safely and uncontroulably pretend it greater or less, as their occasions should enlighten them.

If a man has a prospect of a fair estate, and sees a way open to it, but it must be through fraud, violence, and oppression ; if he see large preferments tendered him, but conditionally upon his doing base and wicked offices ; if he sees he may crush his enemy, but that it must

be by flandering, belying, and giving him a *secret blow*, and conscience shall here, according to its office, interpose, and protest the illegality and injustice of such actions, and the damnation that is expressly threatened to them by the word of God: the thorough-paced politician must presently laugh at the squeamishness of his conscience, and read it another lecture, and tell it, that *just* and *unjust* are but names grounded only upon opinion, and authorized by custom, by which the wise and the knowing part of the world serve themselves upon the ignorant and easy; and that, whatsoever fond priests may talk, there is no devil like an enemy in power, no damnation like being poor, and no hell like an empty purse; and therefore, that those courses by which a man comes to rid himself of these plagues, are *ipso facto* prudent, and consequently pious: the former being, with such wise men, the only measure of the latter. And the truth is, the late times of confusion, in which the heights and refinements of religion were professed, in conjunction with the practice of the most execrable villainies that were ever acted upon the earth; and the weakness of our church-discipline since its restoration, whereby it has been scarce able to get any hold on mens consciences, and much less able

able to keep it ; and the great prevalence of that atheistical doctrine of the *Leviathan*, and the unhappy propagation of *erastianism* ; these things (I say) with some others, have been the sad and fatal causes that have loosed the bands of conscience, and eaten out the very heart and sense of christianity amongst us, to that degree, that there is now scarce any religious tie or restraint upon persons, but merely from those faint remainders of natural conscience, which God will be sure to keep alive upon the hearts of men, as long as they are men, for the great ends of his own Providence, whether they will or no. So that, were it not for this sole obstacle, religion is not now so much in danger of being divided, and torn piece-meal by sects and factions, as of being at once devoured by atheism. Which being so, let none wonder that irreligion is accounted policy, when it is grown even to a fashion ; and passes for wit with some, as well as for wisdom with others : for certain it is, that *advantage* now fits in the room of *conscience*, and steers all ; and no man is esteemed any ways considerable for policy, who wears religion otherwise than as a *cloak* ; that is, as such a garment as may both *cover* and *keep him warm*, and yet hang *loose* upon him too,

3. The third rule, or principle, upon which this policy or wisdom of the world, proceeds, is, *That a man ought to make himself, and not the publick, the chief, if not the sole end of all his actions.* He is to be his own centre and circumference too ; that is, to draw all things to himself, and to extend nothing beyond himself : he is to make the greater world serve the less ; and not only, not to love his neighbour as himself, but indeed to account none for his neighbour, but himself.

And therefore, to die, or suffer for his country, is not only exploded by him as a great paradox in politicks, and fitter for poets to sing of, than for wise men to practise ; but also, to make himself so much as one penny the poorer, or to forbear one base gain, to serve his prince, to secure a whole nation, or to credit a church, is judged by him a great want of experience, and a piece of romantick melancholy, unbecoming a politician, who is still to look upon himself as his prince, his country, his church, nay, and his God too.

The general interest of the nation is nothing to him, but only that portion of it that he either does, or would possess : 'Tis not the rain that waters the whole earth, but that which falls into his own cistern, that must relieve him ;

him ; not the *common*, but the *enclosure*, that must make him rich.

Let the publick sink or swim, so long as he can hold up his head above water : Let the ship be cast away, if he may but have the benefit of the wreck : Let the government be ruined by his avarice, if, by the same avarice, he can scrape together so much as to make his peace, and maintain him as well under another : Let foreigners invade and spoil the land, so long as he has a good estate *in bank* elsewhere. Peradventure, for all this, men may curse him as a covetous wretch, a traitor, and villain : but such words are to be looked upon only as the splendid declaimings of *novices*, and *men of heat*, who, while they rail at his person, perhaps envy his fortune ; or possibly of losers and malecontents, whose portion and inheritance is a freedom to speak. But a politician must be above words : Wealth, he knows, answers all ; and if it brings a storm upon him, will provide him also a coat to weather it out.

That such thoughts and principles as these lie at the bottom of most mens actions : At the bottom, do I say ? nay, sit at the top, and visibly hold the helm in the management of the weightiest affairs of most nations ; we need not much history, nor curiosity of observation,

to convince us : for though there have not been wanting such heretofore, as have practised these unworthy arts, (forasmuch as there have been villains in all places, and all ages) yet now-a-days they are owned above-board ; and whereas men formerly had them in design, amongst us they are openly vouched, argued, and asserted in common discourse.

But this, I confess, being a new, unexemplified kind of policy, scarce comes up to that which the apostle here condemns for the *wisdom of the world*, but must pass rather for the wisdom of this particular age, which, as in most other things, it stands alone, scorning the examples of all former ages ; so it has a way of *policy* and *wisdom* also peculiar to itself.

4. The fourth and last principle, that I shall mention, upon which this wisdom of the world proceeds, is this :

That in shewing kindness, or doing favours, no respect at all is to be had to friendship, gratitude, or sense of honour ; but that such favours are to be done only to the rich or potent, from whom a man may receive a farther advantage, or to his enemies, from whom he may otherwise fear a mischief.

I have here mentioned gratitude, and sense of honour, being (as I may so speak) a man's
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civil conscience, prompting him to many things, upon the accounts of common decency, which religion would otherwise bind him to, upon the score of duty ; and it is sometimes found, that some, who have little or no reverence for religion, have yet those innate feeds and sparks of generosity, as make them scorn to do such things, as would render them mean, in the opinion of sober and worthy men ; and with such persons, *shame* is instead of *piety*, to restrain them from many base and degenerate practices.

But now our politician, having baffled his greater conscience, must not be nonplus'd with inferior obligations ; and having leap'd over such mountains, at length poorly lie down before a mole-hill : but he must add perfection to perfection ; and being past *grace*, endeavour, if need be, to be past *shame* too ; and accordingly, he looks upon friendship, gratitude, and sense of honour, as terms of art to amuse and impose upon weak, undesigning minds : for an enemy's money, he thinks, may be made as good a friend as any ; and gratitude looks backward, and policy forward : And for sense of honour, if it impoverisheth a man, it is, in his esteem, neither honour nor sense.

Whence it is that, now-a-days, only rich men, or enemies, are accounted the rational objects

jects of benefaction : For, to be kind to the former, is traffick, and in these times men present, just as they soil their ground, not that they love the dirt, but that they expect a crop : and for the latter, the politician well approves of the *Indian's* religion, in worshipping the devil, that he may do him no hurt, how much soever he hates him, and is hated by him.

But if a poor, old, decayed friend or relation, whose purse, whose house and heart had been formerly free and open to such an one, shall at length, upon change of fortune, come to him with hunger and rags, pleading his past services, and his present wants, and so crave some relief of one, for the merit and memory of the other ; the politician, who imitates the *serpent's wisdom*, must turn *his deaf ear* too, to all the insignificant *charms* of gratitude and honour, in behalf of such a bankrupt, undone friend, who having being already used, and now squeezed dry, is only fit to be cast aside. He must abhor gratitude, as a worse kind of witchcraft, which only serves to conjure up the pale, meagre ghosts of dead, forgotten kindnesses, to haunt and trouble him ; still respecting what is past ; whereas such wise men as himself, in such cases, account all that is *past*, to be also *gone* ; and know, that there
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can be no gain in refunding, nor any profit in paying debts : The sole measure of all his courtesies is, what return they will make him, and what revenue they will bring him in. His expectations govern his charity : And we must not vouch any man for an exact master in the rules of our modern policy, but such an one as hath brought himself so far to hate and despise the absurdity of being kind upon free-cost, as (to use a known expression) not so much as to tell a friend *what it is a clock for nothing*.

And thus I have finished the first general head proposed from the text, and shewn some of those rules, principles, and maxims that this wisdom of the world acts by : I say, some of them ; for I neither pretend nor desire to know them all.

II. I come now to the other general head, which is to shew the folly and absurdity of these principles, in relation to God. In order to which, we must observe, that *foolishness*, being properly a man's deviation from right reason in point of practice, must needs consist in one of these two things :

1. In his pitching upon such an end as is unsuitable to his condition ; or,
2. In his pitching upon means unsuitable to the compassing of his end.

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There is folly enough in either of these ; and my business shall be to shew, that such as act by the fore-mentioned rules of worldly wisdom, are eminently *foolish* upon both accounts.

1. And first, for that first sort of *foolishness* imputable to them ; namely, That a man, by following such principles, pitches upon that for his end, which no way suits his condition.

Certain it is, and indeed self-evident, that *the wisdom of this world* looks no farther than *this world*. All its designs and efficacy terminate on this side heaven ; nor does policy so much as pretend to any more than to be the great art of raising a man to the plenties, glories, and grandeurs of the world : And if it arrives so far as to make a man rich, potent, and honourable, it has its end, and has done its utmost. But now, that a man cannot rationally make these things his end, will appear from these two considerations :

1. That they reach not the measure of his duration or being ; the perpetuity of which surviving this mortal state, and shooting forth into the endless eternities of another world, must needs render a man infinitely miserable and forlorn, if he has no other comforts, but what he must leave behind him in this : for nothing can make a man happy, but that
which

which shall last as long as he lasts ; and all these enjoyments are much too short for an immortal soul to stretch itself upon, which shall persist in being, not only when profit, pleasure, and honour, but when time itself shall cease, and be no more.

No man can transport his large retinue, his sumptuous fare, and his rich furniture, into another world ; nothing of all these things can continue with him then, but the memory of them. And surely, the bare remembrance that a man was formerly rich or great, cannot make him at all happier there, where an infinite happiness, or an infinite misery shall equally swallow up the sense of these poor felicities : it may indeed contribute to his misery, heighten the anguish, and sharpen the sting of conscience, and so add fury to the everlasting flames, when he shall reflect upon the abuse of all that wealth and greatness that the good providence of God had put as a prize into his hand for worthier purposes, than to damn his nobler and better part, only to please and gratify his worse. But the politician has an answer ready for all these melancholy considerations ; That he for his part, believes none of these things ; as, that there is either an heaven, or an hell, or an immortal soul : no, he is too great a friend to real knowledge, to take
such

such troublesome assertions as these upon trust. Which, if it be his belief, as no doubt it is, let him, for me, continue in it still, and stay for its confutation in another world ; which if he can destroy by disbelieving, his infidelity will do him better service, than as yet he has any cause to presume that it can. But,

(2.) Admitting that either these enjoyments were eternal, or the soul mortal ; and so that, one way or other, they were commensurate to its duration ; yet still they cannot be an end suitable to a rational nature, forasmuch as they fill not the measure of its desires. The foundation of all man's unhappiness here on earth, is the great disproportion between his enjoyments, and his appetites ; which appears evidently in this, that let a man have never so much, he is still desiring something or other more. *Alexander*, we know, was much troubled at the scantiness of nature itself, that there were no more worlds for him to disturb : And, in this respect, every man living has a soul as great as *Alexander* ; and, put under the same circumstances, would own the very same dissatisfactions.

Now this is most certain, that in spiritual natures, so much as there is of desire, so much there is also of capacity to receive. I do not say, there is always a capacity to receive the
very

very thing they desire ; for that may be impossible : but for the degree of happiness, that they propose to themselves from that thing, this, I say, they are capable of. And as God is said to have made man after his own *image*, so upon this quality he seems peculiarly to have stamped the resemblance of his infinity : for man seems as boundless in his desires, as God is in his being ; and therefore nothing but God himself can satisfy him. But the great inequality of all things else to the appetites of a rational soul, appears yet farther from this : That in all these worldly things, that a man pursues with the greatest eagerness and intention of mind imaginable, he finds not half the pleasure in the actual possession of them, that he proposed to himself in the expectation. Which shews, that there is a great cheat or lye, which overspreads the world, while all things here below beguile mens expectations, and their expectations cheat their experience.

Let this therefore be the first thing, in which *the foolishness of this worldly wisdom is manifest*. Namely, that by it a man proposes to himself an end wholly unsuitable to his condition ; as bearing no proportion to the *measure of his duration*, or the *vastness of his desires*.

2. The other thing, in which *foolishness is seen*, is a man's pitching upon means unsuitable to that which he has made his end.

And here, we will, for the present, suppose the things of the world to have neither that shortness, nor emptiness in them, that we have indeed proved them to have; but that they are *so adequate* to all the concerns of an intelligent nature, that they may be rationally fixed upon by men, as the ultimate end of all their designs: yet the folly of this wisdom appears in this, *that* it suggests those means for the acquisition of these enjoyments, that are no ways fit to compass or acquire them, and that upon a double account.

(1.) That they are in themselves unable and insufficient for: and

(2.) That they are frequently opposite to a successful attainment of them.

(1.) And first for their insufficiency: Let politicians contrive as accurately, project as deeply, and pursue, what they have thus contrived and projected, as diligently, as it is possible for human wit and industry to do; yet still the success of all depends upon the favour of an over-ruling hand: for God expressly claims it as a special part of his prerogative, to have the intire disposal of riches, honours, and whatsoever else is apt to command the desires of mankind

mankind here below, *Deut. viii. 18. It is the Lord thy God, that giveth thee power to get wealth.* And in *1 Sam. ii. 30.* God peremptorily declares himself the sole fountain of honour, telling us, that *those that honour him, shall be honoured; and that those that despise him, shall be lightly esteemed.*

And then for dignities and preferments, we have the word of one, that could dispose of these things as much as kings could do, *Prov. xxix. 26.* where he tells us, that *many seek the ruler's favour; that is, apply themselves both to his interest and humour, with all the arts of flattery and obsequiousness, the surest and readiest ways (one would think) to advance a man; and yet, after all, it follows in the next words, that every man's judgment cometh of the Lord: and that, whatsoever may be expected here, it is resolved only in the court of heaven, whether the man shall proceed favourite in the courts of princes, and after all his artificial attendance come to sit at the right-hand, or be made a footstool.* So that, upon full trial of all the courses that policy could either devise or practise, the most experienced masters of it have been often forced to sit down with that complaint of the disciples, *We have toiled all night, and have caught nothing.* For do we not sometimes see, that traitors can be out of

favour, and knaves be beggars, and lose their estates, and be stripped of their offices, as well as honest men?

And why all this? Surely not always for want of craft to spy out where their game lay; nor yet for want of irreligion to give them all the scope of ways lawful and unlawful, to prosecute their intentions: but because the providence of God strikes not in with them, but dashes, and even dispirits all their endeavours, and makes their designs heartless and ineffectual. So that it is not their seeing this man, their belying another, nor their sneaking to a third, that shall be able to do their business, when the designs of heaven will be served by their disappointment. And this is the true cause why so many politick conceptions, so elaborately formed and wrought, and grown at length ripe for delivery, do yet, in the issue, miscarry and prove abortive; for, *being come to the birth*, the all-disposing providence of *God denies them strength to bring forth*. And thus the authors of them, having missed of their mighty aims, are fain to retreat with frustration, and a baffle; and having played the knaves unsuccessfully, to have the ill luck to pass for fools too.

(2.) The means suggested by policy, and worldly wisdom, for the attainment of these earthly

earthly enjoyments, are unfit for that purpose, not only upon the account of their insufficiency for, but also of their frequent opposition and contrariety to the accomplishment of such ends; nothing being more usual, than for these unchristian fishers of men to be fatally caught in their own nets: for does not the text expressly say, that *God taketh the wise in their own craftiness*? And has not our own experience sufficiently commented upon the text, when we have seen some by the very same ways, by which they had designed to rise uncontrollably, and to clear off all obstructions before their ambition, to have directly procured their utter downfall, and to have broke their necks from that very ladder, by which they had thought to have climb'd as high as their father *Lucifer*; and there, from the top of all their greatness, to have looked down with scorn upon all below them?

Such persons are the proper and lawful objects of derision, forasmuch as God himself laughs at them.

Haman wanted nothing to complete his greatness, but a gallows, upon which to hang *Mordecai*; but it mattered not for whom he provided the gallows, when Providence designed the rope for him.

With what contempt does the apostle here, in the 20th verse of this iii^d chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*, repeat those words of the *psalmist* concerning all the fine artifices of worldly wisdom; *The Lord*, says he, *knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*. All their contrivances are but thin, slight, despicable things, and, for the most part, destructive of themselves; nothing being more equal in justice, and indeed more natural in the direct consequence and connexion of effects and causes, than for men wickedly wise to out-wit themselves, and for such as wrestle with Providence to trip up their own heels.

It is clear therefore, that the charge of this second sort of foolishness is made good upon worldly wisdom; for that having made men pitch upon an end unfit for their condition, it also makes them pitch upon means unfit to attain that end; and that both by reason of their inability for, and frequent contrariety to the bringing about such designs.

This, I say, has been made good in the general; but since particulars convince with greater life and evidence, we will resume the forementioned principles of the politician, and shew severally in each of them, how little efficacy they have to advance the practisers of them to the things they aspire to by them.

1. And first, for his first principle, *That the politician must maintain a constant, habitual dissimulation.* Concerning which I shall lay down this as certain; that dissimulation can be no farther useful, than it is concealed; forasmuch as no man will trust a known cheat: and it is also as certain, that, as some men use dissimulation for their interest, so others have an interest as strongly engaging them to use all the art and industry they can to find it out, and to assure themselves of the truth or falshood of those with whom they deal: which renders it infinitely hard, if not morally impossible, for a man to carry on a constant course of dissimulation without discovery; and being once discovered, it is not only no help, but the greatest impediment of action in the world. For, since man is but of a very limited, narrow power in his own person, and consequently can effect no great matter merely by his own personal strength, but as he acts in society and conjunction with others, without first engaging their trust; and moreover, since men will trust no farther than they judge a person for his sincerity fit to be trusted; it follows, that a discover'd dissembler can atchieve nothing great or considerable: for, not being able to gain mens trust, he cannot gain their concurrence, and so is left alone to act singly, and upon his

own bottom; and, while that is the sphere of his activity, all that he can do must needs be contemptible. We know how successful the late * *usurper* was, while his army believed him real in his zeal against kingship: but, when they found out the imposture, upon his aspiring to the same himself, he was presently deserted and opposed by them, and never able to crown his usurped greatness with the addition of that title, which he so passionately thirsted after. Add to this the judgment of as great an *English* author as ever wrote, with great confidence affirming, *That the ablest men that ever were, had all an openness and frankness of dealing; and that, if at any time such did dissemble, their dissimulation took effect, merely in the strength of that reputation they had gained by their veracity and clear dealing in the main.* From all which it follows, that dissimulation can be of no farther use to a man, than just to guard him within the compass of his own personal concerns; which yet may be more easily, and not less effectually done, by that silence and reservedness, that every man may innocently practise, without the putting on of any contrary disguise.

2. The politician's second principle was, *That conscience, or religion, ought never to stand between any man and his temporal advantage.* Which indeed is properly atheism; and, so far as it is practised, tends to the dissolution of society, the bond of which is Religion: forasmuch as a man's happiness, or misery, in his converse with other men, depends chiefly upon their doing, or not doing those things which human laws can take no cognizance of; such as are all actions capable of being done in secret, and out of the view of mankind, which yet have the greatest influence upon our neighbour, even in his nearest and dearest concerns. And if there be no inward sense of religion to awe men from the doing unjust actions, provided they can do them without discovery, it is impossible for any man to sit secure or happy in the possession of any thing that he enjoys: And this inconvenience the politician must expect from others, as well as they have felt from him, unless he thinks that he can engross this principle to his own practice, and that others cannot be as false and atheistical as himself, especially having had the advantage of his copy to write after.

3. The third principle was, *That the politician ought to make himself, and not the public,*

lick, the chief, if not the sole end of all that he does.

But here we shall quickly find, that the *private spirit* will prove as pernicious in *temporals*, as ever it did in *spirituals*: For while every particular member of the publick provides singly and solely for itself, the several joints of the body politic do thereby separate and disunite, and so become unable to support the whole; and when the publick interests once fail, let private interests subsist if they can, and prevent an *universal* ruin from involving in it *particulars*. It is not a man's wealth, that can be sure to save him, if the enemy be wise enough to refuse part of it tender'd as a ransom, when it is as easy for him to destroy the owner, and to take the whole. When the hand finds itself well warmed, and covered, let it refuse the trouble of feeding the mouth, or guarding the head, 'till the body be starved, or killed, and then we shall see how it will fare with the hand. The *Athenians*, the *Romans*, and all other nations that grew great out of little or nothing, did so merely by the publick-mindedness of particular persons; and the same courses that first raised nations and governments, must support them: so that, were there no such thing as religion, prudence were enough to enforce this upon all.

For

For our own parts, let us reflect upon our glorious and renowned *English* ancestors, men eminent in church and state, and we shall find, that this was the method by which they preserved both.

We have succeeded into their labours, and the fruits of them ; and it will both concern and become us to succeed also into their principles : for it is no man's duty to be safe, or to be rich ; but I am sure, it is the duty of every one to make good his trust : and it is a calamity to a whole nation, that any man should have a place or an employment more large and publick than his spirit.

4. The fourth and last principle mentioned, was, *That the politician must not, in doing kindnesses, consider his friends, but only gratify rich men, or enemies.* Which principle (as to that branch of it relating to enemies) was certainly first borrowed, and fetched up from the very bottom of hell, and uttered (no doubt) by particular and immediate inspiration of the devil : and yet (as much of the devil as it carries in it) it neither is nor can be more villainous and detestable, than it is really silly, senseless, and impolitick.

But to go over the several parts of this principle ; and to begin with the supposed policy of gratifying only the rich and opulent : Does
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our wise man think, that the grandee, whom he so courts, does not see through all the little plots of his courtship, as well as he himself: and so, at the same time, while he accepts the gift, laugh in his sleeve at the design, and despise the giver?

But, for the *neglect of friends*, as it is the height of baseness, so it can never be proved rational, 'till we prove the person using it *omnipotent and self-sufficient*, and such as can never need any mortal assistance. But if he be a *man*, that is, a poor, weak creature, subject to change and misery, let him know, that it is the *friend* only, that God has made for *the day of adversity*, as the most suitable and sovereign help that humanity is capable of: and those (though in highest place) who slight and disoblige their friends, shall infallibly come to know the value of them, by having none, when they shall most need them.

That prince, that maintains the reputation of a true, fast, generous friend, has an army always ready to fight for him, maintained to his hand without pay.

As for the other part of this principle, that concerns the gratifying of enemies; it is (to say no more) an absurdity parallel to the former: for when a man shall have done all he can, given all he has, to oblige an enemy,
he

Serm. 9. of *this World*. 349

he shall find, that he has *armed him* indeed, but not at all *altered him*.

The scripture bids us *pray for our enemies*, and *love our enemies*, but no-where does it bid us *trust* our enemies; nay, it strictly cautions us against it: *Prov. xxvi. 25. When he speaketh thee fair, (says the text) believe him not; for there are yet seven abominations in his heart.* And, in good earnest, it would be a rarity worth the seeing, could any one shew us such a thing as a *perfectly reconciled enemy*. Men are generally credulous at first, and will not take up this great and safe truth at the cost of *other mens* experience, 'till they come to be bitten into a sense of it by their own; but are apt to take fair professions, fawning looks, treats, entertainments, visits, and such-like pitiful stuff, for friendship and reconcilement, and so to admit the serpent into their bosom: but let them come once to depend upon this new-made friend, or reconciled enemy, in any great or real concern of life, and they shall find him *false as hell*, and *cruel as the grave*. And I know nothing more to be wondered at, than that those reconcilements which are so difficult, and even next to impossible in the *effect*, should yet be so frequent in the *attempt*; especially since the reason of this difficulty lies as deep as nature itself; which, after it has
done

done an injury, will for ever be suspicious ; and I would fain see the man that can perfectly *love* the person whom he *suspects*.

There is a noted story of *Hector* and *Ajax*, who having combated one another, ended that combat in a reconciliation, and testified that reconciliation by mutual presents ; *Hector* giving *Ajax* a sword, and *Ajax* presenting *Hector* with a belt : the consequence of which was, that *Ajax* slew himself with the sword given him by *Hector*, and *Hector* was dragged about the walls of *Troy* by the belt given him by *Ajax* : such are the gifts, such are the killing-kindnesses of *reconciled enemies*.

Confident men may try what conclusions they please, at their own peril : but let history be consulted, reason heard, and experience call'd in to speak impartially what it has found, and I believe they will all with one voice declare, that (whatsoever the grace of God may do in the miraculous change of mens hearts ; yet, according to the common methods of the world) a man may *as well expect to make the devil himself his friend, as an enemy that has given him the first blow*.

And thus I have gone over the two general heads proposed from the words, and shewn both *what those principles are, upon which this wisdom of the world does proceed ; and also wherein*

wherein the folly and absurdity of them does consist.

And now, into what can we more naturally improve the whole foregoing discourse, than into that practical inference of our apostle, in the verse before the text? that *if any man desires the reputation of wisdom, he should become a fool, that he may be wise*; that is, *a fool to the world, that he may be wise to God.*

Let us not be ashamed of the folly of being sincere, and without guile; without traps and snares in our converse; of being fearful to build our estates upon the ruin of our consciences; of preferring the publick good before our own private emolument; and, lastly, of being true to all the offices of friendship, the obligations of which are sacred, and will certainly be exacted of us by the great Judge of all our actions: I say, let us not blush to be found guilty of all these *follies*, (as some account them) rather than to be expert in that kind of wisdom, that God himself, the great Fountain of wisdom, has pronounced to be *earthly, sensual, devilish*; and of the wretched absurdity of which, all histories, both ecclesiastical and civil, have given us such pregnant and convincing examples.

Reflect upon *Achitophel, Haman, Sejanus, Cæsar Borgia*, and other such masters of the arts of policy, who thought they had fixed themselves
upon

upon so sure a bottom, that they might even defy and dare Providence to the face ; and yet how did God bring an absolute disappointment, like one great blot, over all their fine, artificial contrivances ? Every one of those mighty and profound sages coming to a miserable and disastrous end.

The consideration of which, and the like passages, one would think, should make men grow weary of dodging and shewing tricks with God in their own crooked ways, and even force them to acknowledge it for the surest and most unfailing prudence, wholly to commit their persons and concerns to the wise and good Providence of God, in the strait and open ways of his own commands.

Who, we may be confident, is more tenderly concerned for the good of those that truly fear and serve him, than it is possible for the most selfish of men to be concerned for themselves : and who, in all the troubles and disturbances, all the cross, difficult, and perplexing passages that can fall out, will be sure to guide all to this happy issue, *that all things shall work together for good to those that love God.*

To which God, infinitely wise, holy, and just, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

The

*The Absurdity and Danger of the No-
tion, That God accepts the Will for
the Deed, demonstrated,*

IN A
S E R M O N

Preached at

CHRIST-CHURCH, *Oxon,*

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

May 3. 1685.

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S E R M O N X.

Good Intentions no Excuse
for bad Actions.

1 COR. viii. 12.

*For if there be first a willing mind, it
is accepted according to that a man
hath, and not according to that he
hath not.*

IN dealing with mens consciences, for the taking them off from sin, I know nothing of so direct and efficacious an influence, as the right stating of those general rules and principles of actions, that men are apt to guide their lives and consciences by : for if these be true, and withal rightly applied, men must needs proceed upon firm and safe grounds ;

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but if either false in themselves, or not right in their particular application, the whole course, that men are thereby engaged in, being founded in sin and error, must needs lead to, and at length end in death and confusion ; there being (as the wise man tells us) *a way that may seem right in a man's own eyes, when, nevertheless, the end of that way is death.*

Now, as amongst these principles or rules of action, the pretences of the spirit, and of tenderness of conscience, and the like, have been the late grand artifices by which crafty and designing hypocrites have so much abused the world ; so I shall now instance in another of no less note, by which the generality of men are as apt to abuse themselves : And that is a certain rule or sentence got almost into every man's mouth, *that God accepts the will for the deed.* A principle (as usually applied) of less malice, I confess ; but, considering the easiness, and withal the fatality of the delusion, of more mischief than the other.

And this I shall endeavour to search into, and lay open, in the following discourse.

The words hold forth a general rule or proposition delivered upon a particular occasion ; which was, the apostle's exhorting the *Corinthians* to an holy and generous emulation of the charity of the *Macedonians*, in contributing
freely

freely to the relief of the poor saints at *Jerusalem*; upon this great encouragement, that in all such works of charity, it is the *will* that gives worth to the oblation, and, as to God's acceptance, sets the poorest giver upon the same level with the richest. Nor is this all; but so perfectly does the value of all charitable acts take its measure and proportion from the *will*, and from the fulness of the *heart*, rather than that of the *hand*, that a *lesser supply* may be oftentimes a *greater charity*; and the *widow's mite*, in the balance of the *sanctuary*, outweigh the shekels, and perhaps the talents of the most opulent and wealthy; the *all* and utmost of the one being certainly a nobler alms, than the superfluities of the other: and all this upon the account of the great rule here set down in the text; That in all transactions between God and man, wheresoever there is a full resolution, drift, and purpose of *will* to please God, there what a man *can do*, shall, by virtue thereof, be accepted; and what *he cannot*, shall not be required. From whence these two propositions, in sense and design much the same, do naturally result.

I. The first of them *expressed* in the words; to wit, that God accepts the *will*, where there is no power to perform.

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II. The other of them *implied* ; namely, that where there is a power to perform, God does not accept the will.

Of all the spiritual tricks and legerdemain, by which men are apt to shift off their duty, and to impose upon their own souls, there is none so common, and of so fatal an import, as these two ; the plea of a *good intention*, and the plea of a *good will*.

One or both of them being used by men, almost at every turn, to elude the precept, to put God off with something instead of obedience, and so, in effect, to out-wit him whom they are called to obey ; they are certainly two of the most effectual instruments and engines in the devil's hands, to wind and turn the souls of men by, to whatsoever he pleases. For,

1. The plea of a good intention will serve to sanctify and authorise the very worst of actions. The proof of which is but too full and manifest, from that lewd and scandalous doctrine of the *Jesuits* concerning the direction of the intention, and likewise from the whole manage of the late accursed rebellion. In which it was this insolent and impudent pretence, that emboldened the worst of men to wade thro' the blood of the best of kings, and the loyalest of subjects : namely, that in all that risque of villainy, *their hearts*, forsooth, *were*

were right towards God; and that all their plunder and rapine was for nothing else, but to place Christ on his throne, and to establish amongst us the power of godliness, and the purity of the gospel, by a farther reformation (as the cant goes) of a church, which had but too much felt the meaning of that word before.

But such persons consider not, that tho' an ill intention is certainly sufficient to spoil and corrupt an act in itself materially good; yet no good intention whatsoever can rectify or infuse a moral goodness into an act otherwise evil. To come to church, is, no doubt, an act in itself materially good: yet he who does it with an ill intention, comes to God's house upon the devil's errand; and the whole act is thereby rendered absolutely evil and detestable before God. But, on the other side, *if it* were possible for a man to *intend well*, while he *does ill*; yet no such *intention*, tho' never so good, can make that man steal, lye, or murder with a good conscience, or convert a wicked action into a good.

For these things are against the nature of morality; in which nothing is or can be really good, without an universal concurrence of all the principles and ingredients requisite to a moral action; tho' the failure of any one of them will imprint a malignity upon that act,

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which, in spite of all the other requisite ingredients, shall stamp it absolutely evil, and corrupt it past the cure of a *good intention*.

And thus, as I have shewn, that the plea of a *good intention* is used by men to warrant and patronize the most villainous and wicked actions; so, in the next place, the plea of a *good will* will be found equally efficacious to supersede, and take off the necessity of all holy and good actions. For still (as I have observed) the great art of the devil, and the principal deceit of the heart, is, to put a trick upon the command, and to keep fair with God himself, while men fall foul upon his laws: for both law and gospel call aloud for active obedience, and such a piety as takes not up either with faint notions, or idle insignificant inclinations, but such an one as shews itself in the solid instances of practice and performance. For, *do this and live, saith the law*, Luke x. 28. And, *if ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them, says the gospel*, John xiii. 17. And, *not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven*, Mat. vii. 21. And, *let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous*, 1 John iii. 7. with innumerable more such places; all of them
terrible

terrible and severe injunctions of practice, and equally severe obligations to it.

But then in comes the benign latitude of the doctrine of good will, and cuts asunder all these hard, pinching cords; and tells you, that if this be but piously and well inclined, if the bent of the spirit (as some call it) be towards God and goodness, God accepts of this above, nay, instead of all external works; those being but the shell or husk, this the kernel, the quintessence, and the very soul of duty. But for all this, these bents, and propensities, and inclinations will not do the business: the bare bending of the bow will not hit the mark without shooting the arrow; and men are not called to will, but to work out their salvation.

But what then? Is it not as certain from the text, that God sometimes accepts the will, as it is from those forementioned scriptures, that God commands the deed? Yes, no doubt: since it is impossible for the Holy Ghost to contradict that in one place of scripture, which he had affirmed in another. In all the foregoing places, doing is expressly commanded, and no happiness allowed to any thing short of it; and yet here God is said to accept of the will; and can both these stand together without manifest contradiction? That which enjoins the deed, is certainly God's law; and it is also as certain, that
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the scripture that allows of the will, is neither the abrogation, nor derogation, nor dispensation, nor relaxation of that law.

In order to the clearing of which, I shall lay down these two assertions.

(1.) That every law of God commands the obedience of the whole man.

(2.) That the will is never accepted by God, but as it is the obedience of the whole man.

So that the allowance or acceptance of the *will*, mentioned in the text, takes off nothing from the obligation of those laws, in which the *deed* is so plainly and positively enjoined; but is only an *interpretation*, or declaration of the true sense of those laws, shewing the *equity* of them: which is as really essential to every law, and gives it its obliging force as much, as the justice of it; and indeed is not another, or a distinct thing from the justice of it, any more than a particular case is from an universal rule.

But you will say, how can the obedience of the *will* ever be proved to be the obedience of the *whole man*?

For answer to which, we are first to consider every man as a moral, and consequently as a rational agent; and then to consider, what is the office and influence of the will in every moral action. Now the morality of an action
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is founded in the freedom of that principle, by virtue of which it is in the agent's power, having all things ready and requisite to the performance of an action, either to perform, or not to perform it. And, as the will is endued with this freedom, so is it also endued with a power to command all the other faculties, both of soul and body, to execute what it has so willed and decreed, and that without resistance; so that, upon the last dictate of the will for the doing of such or such a thing, all the other faculties proceed immediately to act according to their respective offices. By which it is manifest, that in point of action the will is virtually the whole man; as containing in it all that, which by virtue of his other faculties he is able to do: just as the spring of a watch is virtually the whole motion of the watch; forasmuch as it imparts a motion to all the wheels of it.

Thus, as to the soul: if the will bids the understanding think, study, and consider; it will accordingly apply itself to thought, study, and consideration: if it bids the affections love, rejoice, or be angry; an act of love, joy, or anger will follow. And then, for the body: If the will bids the leg go, it goes; if it bids the hand do this, it does it. So that a man is a moral agent, only as he is endued with, and
acts

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acts by a free and commanding principle of will.

And therefore, when God says, *My son, give me thy heart*, (which there signifies *the will*) it is as much as if he had commanded the service of the whole man: for whatsoever the will commands, the whole man must do; the empire or dominion of the will over all the faculties of soul and body (as to most of the operations of each of them) being absolutely over-ruling and despotical. From whence it follows, that when the will has exerted an act of command upon any faculty of the soul, or member of the body, it has, by so doing, done all that the whole man, as a moral agent, can do for the actual exercise or employment of such a faculty or member. And if so, then what is not done in such a case, is certainly not in a man's power to do; and consequently, is no part of the obedience required of him; no man being commanded, or obliged to obey beyond his power. And therefore the obedience of the will to God's commands is the obedience of the *whole man* (forasmuch as it includes and infers it); which was the assertion that we undertook to prove.

But you will say, If the prerogative of the will be such, that where it commands the hand to give an alms, the leg to kneel, or to go to church,

church, or the tongue to utter a prayer, all these things will infallibly be done: suppose we now, a man be bound hand and foot by some outward violence, or be laid up with the gout, or disabled for any of these functions by a palsy; can the *will*, by its command, make a man in such a condition utter a prayer, or kneel, or go to church? No, it is manifest it cannot: but then you are to know also, that neither is vocal prayer, or bodily kneeling, or going to church, in such a case, any part of the obedience required of such a person: but that act of his will hitherto spoken of, that would have put his body upon all these actions, had there been no impediment, is that man's whole obedience; and for that very cause that it is so, and for no other, it stands here accepted, by God.

From all which discourse this must naturally and directly be inferred, as a certain truth, and the chief foundation of all that can be said upon this subject: namely, that whosoever wills the doing of a thing, if the doing of it be in his power, he will certainly do it; and whosoever does not do that thing, which he has in his power to do, does not really and properly will it. For tho' the act of the will commanding, and the act of any other faculty of the soul or body executing that which is so
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commanded, be physically, and in the precise nature of things, distinct and several; yet morally, as they proceed in subordination, from one intire, free, moral agent, both in divinity and morality, they pass but for one and the same action.

Now, that from the foregoing particulars we may come to understand, how far this rule of *God's accepting the will for the deed* holds good in the sense of the apostle, we must consider it in these three things.

1. The original ground and reason of it.
2. The just measure and bounds of it: and,
3. The abuse or misapplication of it.

And first for the original ground and reason of this rule: It is founded upon that great, self-evident, and eternal truth, That the just, the wise, and good God neither does nor can require of any man any thing that is impossible, or naturally beyond his power to do: and therefore, in the second place, the *measure of this rule*, by which the just extent and bounds of it are to be determined, must be that *power* or *ability* that man naturally has, to do or perform the things willed by him. So that, wheresoever such a power is found, there this rule of *God's accepting the will* has no place; and wheresoever such a power is not found, there this rule presently becomes in force. And accordingly,

cordingly, in the third and last place, *the abuse or misapplication* of this rule will consist in these two things:

1. That men do very often take that to be an act of the will, that really and truly is not so.

2. That they reckon many things impossible, that indeed are not impossible.

And first, to begin with mens mistakes about the will, and the acts of it; I shall note these three, by which men are extremely apt to impose upon themselves.

(1.) As, first, the bare *approbation* of the *worth and goodness* of a thing is not properly the willing of that thing; and yet men do very commonly account it so. But this is properly an act of the understanding or judgment; a faculty wholly distinct from the will, and which makes a principal part of that, which in divinity we call natural conscience; and in the strength of which a man may approve of things good and excellent without ever willing or intending the practice of them. And accordingly, the apostle, *Rom. ii. 18.* gives us an account of some who approved of things excellent, and yet practised, and consequently willed things clean contrary; since no man can commit a sin, but he must will it first. Whosoever observes and looks into the workings of
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of his own heart, will find that noted sentence --- *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, too frequently and fatally verified upon himself. The viith of the *Romans* (which has been made the unhappy scene of so much controversy about these matters) has several passages to this purpose. In a word, to judge what ought to be done, is one thing ; and to will the doing of it, is quite another.

No doubt, virtue is a beautiful and a glorious thing in the eyes of the most vicious person breathing ; and all that he does, or can hate in it, is the difficulty of its practice ; for it is practice alone that divides the world into virtuous and vicious : but otherwise, as to the theory and speculation of *virtue* and *vice*, *honest* and *dishonest*, the generality of mankind are much the same ; for men do not approve of virtue by choice and free election, but it is an homage which nature commands all understandings to pay to it, by necessary determination : and yet, after all, it is but a faint, unactive thing ; for, in defiance of the judgment, the *will* may still remain as perverse, and as much a stranger to virtue, as it was before. In fine, there is as much *difference* between the *approbation* of the *judgment*, and the actual volitions of the *will*, with relation to the same object, as there is between a man's viewing a
desire-

desirable thing with his eye, and his reaching after it with his hand.

(2.) The *wishing* of a thing, is not properly the willing of it, though too often mistaken by men for such: but it is that which is called by the schools an *imperfect velleity*, and imports no more than an idle, unoperative complacency in, and desire of the end, without any consideration of, nay, for the most part, with a direct abhorrence of the means; of which nature I account the wish of *Balaam*, in *Numb. xxiii. 10. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

The thing itself appeared desirable to him, and accordingly he could not but like and desire it; but then it was after a very irrational, absurd way, and contrary to all the methods and principles of a rational agent; which never wills a thing really and properly, but it applies to the means by which it is to be acquired. But at that very time that *Balaam* desired to *die the death of the righteous*, he was actually following *the wages of unrighteousness*, and so thereby engaged in a course quite contrary to what he desired; and consequently, such as could not possibly bring him to such an end. Much like the sot, that cried, *Utinam hoc esset laborare*, while he lay lazing and lolling upon his couch.

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But every true act of volition imports a respect to the end, by and through the means ; and wills a thing only in that way, in which it is to be compassed or effected : which is the foundation of that most true aphorism, *That he who wills the end, wills also the means.* The truth of which is founded in such a necessary connexion of the terms, that I look upon the proposition, not only as *true*, but *convertible* ; and that, as a man cannot truly and properly *will the end*, but he must also *will the means* ; so neither can he *will the means*, but he must virtually, and by interpretation at least, *will the end*. Which is so true, that in the account of the divine law, a man is reckoned to *will* even those things that naturally are not the object of desire ; such as death itself, *Ezek. xviii. 31.* only because he *wills* those ways and courses that naturally *tend to*, and *end in* it. And even our own common-law looks upon a man's raising *arms* against, or *imprisoning* his *prince*, as an imagining or compassing of his death : forasmuch as these actions are the means directly leading to it, and, for the most part, actually concluding in it ; and consequently, that the *willing* of the one, is the *willing* of the other also.

To *will* a thing therefore, is certainly much another thing from what the generality of men, espe-

especially in their spiritual concerns, take it to be : I say, in their spiritual concerns ; for, in their temporal, it is manifest, that they think and judge much otherwise , and in the things of this world, no man is allowed or believed to *will* any thing heartily, which he does not endeavour after proportionably. A *wish* is properly a man of *desire*, fitting, or lying *still* ; but an act of the *will*, is a man of *business*, vigorously going about his work : And certainly there is a great deal of difference between a man's stretching out his arms to work, and his stretching them out only to *yawn*.

(3.) And, *lastly*, a mere *inclination* to a thing, is not properly a *willing* of that thing ; and yet, in matters of duty, no doubt, men frequently reckon it for such : for otherwise, why should they so often plead, and rest in the *goodness of their hearts*, and the honest and well-inclined dispositions of their minds, when they are justly charged with an actual non-performance of what the law requires of them ?

But that an *inclination* to a thing, is not a *willing* of that thing, is irrefragably proved by this one argument, that a man may act virtuously against his *inclination*, but not against his *will* : he may be *inclined* to one thing, and

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yet *will* another ; and therefore *inclination* and *will* are not the same.

For a man may be naturally inclined to pride, lust, anger, and strongly inclined so too, (forasmuch as these inclinations are founded in a peculiar crasis and constitution of the blood and spirits ;) and yet, by a steady frequent repetition of the contrary acts of humility, chastity, and meekness, carried thereto by his will, (a principle not to be controul'd by the blood or spirits) he may at length plant in his soul all those contrary habits of virtue : And therefore it is certain, that while inclination bends the soul one way, a well-disposed and resolved will may effectually draw it another : a sufficient demonstration, doubtless, that they are two very different things ; for where there may be a contrariety, there is certainly a diversity. A good inclination, is but the first rude draught of virtue ; but the finishing strokes are from the will ; which, if well-disposed, will by degrees perfect : if ill-disposed, will, by the super-induction of ill-habits, quickly deface it.

God never accepts a good inclination, instead of a good action, where that action may be done ; nay, so much the contrary, that if a good inclination be not seconded by a good action,

action, the want of that action is thereby made so much the more criminal and inexcusable.

A man may be naturally well and virtuously inclined, and yet never do one good or virtuous action all his life. A bowl may lie still for all its bias : but it is impossible for a man to will virtue, and virtuous actions, heartily, but he must in the same degree offer at the practice of them ; forasmuch as the dictates of the will are (as we have shewn) despotical, and command the whole man : it being a contradiction in morality, for the will to go one way, and the man another.

And thus as to the first abuse, or misapplication of the great rule mentioned in the text, about *God's accepting the will*, I have shewn three notable mistakes, which men are apt to entertain concerning the will ; and proved, that neither a bare approbation of, nor a mere wishing, or unactive complacency in, or, lastly, a natural inclination to things virtuous and good, can pass before God for a man's willing of such things ; and consequently, if men, upon this account, will needs take up, and acquiesce in an airy, ungrounded persuasion, that they will those things which really they do not will, they fall thereby into a gross and fatal delusion ; a delusion, that must and will shut the door of salvation against them :

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They catch *at heaven*, but embrace *a cloud* ; they mock God, who will not be mocked ; and deceive their own souls, which (God knows) may too easily be both deceived, and destroyed too.

2. Come we now, in the next place, to consider the *other way*, by which men are prone to abuse and pervert this important rule of *God's accounting the will for the deed* ; and that is, by reckoning many things impossible, which in truth, are not impossible.

And this I shall make appear, by shewing some of the principal instances of duty, for the performance of which, men commonly plead want of *power* ; and thereupon persuade themselves, that God and the law rest satisfied with their *will*.

Now these instances are four :

(1.) In duties of very great and hard labour. Labour is confessedly a great part of the curse ; and therefore, no wonder, if men fly from it : which they do with so great an aversion, that few men know their own strength, for want of trying it ; and, upon that account, think themselves really unable to do many things, which, experience would convince them, they have more ability to effect, than they have will to attempt.

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It is idleness that creates impossibilities; and, where men care not to do a thing, they shelter themselves under a persuasion, that it cannot be done. The shortest and the surest way to prove a work possible, is strenuously to set about it; and no wonder if that proves it possible, that, for the most part, makes it so.

Dig, says the unjust steward, *I cannot*: But why? Did either his legs or his arms fail him? No, but day-labour was but an hard, and a dry kind of livelihood, to a man that could get an estate with two or three strokes of his pen; and find so great a *treasure* as he did, without *digging* for it.

But such excuses will not pass muster with God, who will allow no man's humour or idleness to be the measure of *possible* or *impossible*. And to manifest the wretched hypocrisy of such pretences, those very things, which, upon the bare obligation of duty, are declined by men as impossible, presently become not only possible, but readily practicable too, in a case of extreme necessity: as, no doubt, that fore-mentioned instance of fraud and laziness, the *unjust steward*, who pleaded that he could neither *dig*, nor *beg*, would quickly have been brought both to *dig*, and to *beg* too, rather than starve: And if so, what reason could such an one produce before God, why he could not

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submit to the same hardships, rather than cheat and lye ? The *former* being but destructive of the body, the *latter* of the soul : And certainly, the highest and dearest concerns of a temporal life, are infinitely less valuable than those of an eternal ; and consequently ought, without any demur at all, to be sacrificed to them, whenever they come in competition with them. He who can digest any labour, rather than *die*, must refuse no labour, rather than *sin*.

(2.) The second instance shall be, in duties of great and apparent danger. Danger (as the world goes) generally absolves from duty : This being a case, in which most men, according to a very ill sense, will needs be *a law to themselves* ; and where it is not safe for them to be religious, their *religion* shall be *to be safe*. But christianity teaches us a very different lesson : for, if fear of *suffering* could take off the necessity of *obeying*, the doctrine of the cross would certainly be a very idle, and a senseless thing ; and Christ would never have prayed, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, had the bitterness of the draught made it impossible to be drunk of. If death and danger are things that really cannot be endured, no man could ever be obliged to suffer for his conscience, or to die for his religion ; it being altogether as absurd, to imagine

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gine a man obliged to *suffer*, as to *do* impossibilities.

But those primitive heroes of the christian church could not so easily blow off the doctrine of *passive obedience*, as to make the fear of being *passive*, a discharge from being *obedient*: no, they found martyrdom not only possible, but, in many cases, a duty also; a duty dressed up indeed with all that was terrible and afflictive to human nature, yet not at all the less a duty for being so: and such an height of christianity possessed those noble souls, that every martyr could keep one eye steadily fixed upon his duty, and look death and danger out of countenance with the other: nor did they flinch from duty for fear of martyrdom, when one of the most quickening motives to duty was their desire of it.

But to prove the possibility of a thing, there is no argument like to that which looks backwards; for what has been done or suffered, may certainly be done or suffered again: and to prove that men may be martyrs, there needs no other demonstration, than to shew that many have been so; besides that the grace of God has not so far abandoned the christian world, but that those high primitive instances of *passive fortitude*, in the case of *duty* and *danger* rivalling one another, have been exempli-

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exemplified, and (as it were) revived by several glorious copies of them in the succeeding ages of the church.

And (thanks be to God) we need not look very far backward for some of them, even amongst ourselves: for when a violent, victorious faction and rebellion had over-run all, and made loyalty to the king, and conformity to the church, crimes unpardonable, and of a guilt not to be expiated, but at the price of life and estate; when men were put to swear away all interest in the next world, to secure a very poor one in this; (for they had then oaths to murder souls, as well as sword and pistol for the body; nay,) when the persecution ran so high, that that execrable monster *Cromwell* made and published that barbarous, heathenish, or rather inhuman edict against the poor suffering episcopal clergy, *That they should neither preach nor pray in publick, nor baptize, nor marry, nor bury, nor teach school, no, nor so much as live in any gentleman's house*, who, in mere charity and compassion, might be inclined to take them in from perishing in the streets; that is, in other words, that they must starve and die *ex officio*, and, being turned out of their *churches*, take possession only of the *church-yard*, as so many victims to the remorseless rage of a foul, ill-bred tyrant,

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professing piety without so much as common humanity : I say, when rage and persecution, cruelty and *Cromwellism* were at that diabolical pitch, tyrannizing over every thing that look'd like loyalty, conscience, and conformity ; so that he, who took not their *engagement*, could not take any thing else, though it were given him ; being thereby debarred from the very common benefit of the law, in suing for, or recovering of his right in any of their courts of justice, (all of them still following the motion of the *high* one) ; yet even then, and under that black and dismal state of things, there were many thousands who never bowed the knee to *Baal-Cromwell*, *Baal-covenant*, or *Baal-engagement* ; but with a steady, fixed, unshaken resolution, and in a glorious imitation of those heroick christians in the xth and xiith Chapters of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, *endured a great fight of afflictions, were made a gazing-stock by reproaches, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, had trial of cruel mockings ; moreover of bonds and imprisonments ; sometimes were tempted, sometimes were slain with the sword ; wandered about in hunger and nakedness, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.* All which sufferings surely ought to entitle them to that concluding character in the next words, *Of whom the world was not worthy.*

And,

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And I wish I could say of *England*, that it were worthy of those men now. For I look upon the old *church of England Royalists* (which I take to be only another name for a man who prefers his conscience before his interest) to be the best christians, and the most meritorious subjects in the world; as having passed all those terrible tests and trials, which conquering, domineering malice could put them to, and carried their credit, and their conscience, clear and triumphant thro' and above them all, constantly firm and immoveable, by all that they felt either from their professed enemies, or their false friends. And what these men did and suffered, others might have done and suffered too.

But they, good men! had another and more artificial sort of conscience, and a way to interpret off a command, where they found it dangerous or unprofitable to do it.

“ God knows my heart, (says one) I love
“ the king cordially. And I wish well to the
“ church (says another); but you see the state
“ of things is altered, and we cannot do what
“ we would do. Our will is good, and the
“ king gracious; and we hope he will accept
“ of this, and dispense with the rest.” A
goodly present, doubtless, as they meant it;
and such as they might freely give, and yet part
with

with nothing; and the king, on the other hand, receive, and gain just as much.

But now, had the whole nation mocked God and their king at this shuffling, hypocritical rate, what an odious, infamous people must that rebellion have represented the *English* to all posterity? Where had been the honour of the Reformed religion, that could not afford a man christian enough to suffer for his God, and his prince? But the old Royalists did both, and thereby demonstrated to the world, that no danger could make duty impossible.

And, upon my conscience, if we may assign any other reason or motive of the late mercies of God to these poor kingdoms, besides his own proneness to shew mercy, it was for the sake of the old, suffering Cavaliers, and for the sake of none else whatsoever, that God delivered us from the two late accursed conspiracies: for they were the brats and off-spring of two contrary factions, both of them equally mortal and inveterate enemies of our church; which they have been, and still are, perpetually pecking and striking at with the same malice, tho' with different methods.

In a word: the old, tried church of *England* Royalists were the men, who, in the darkest and foulest day of persecution, that ever beset *England*, never pleaded the will in excuse of the

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the deed; but proved the integrity and loyalty of their wills, both by their deeds, and their sufferings too.

But, on the contrary, when duty and danger stand confronting one another, and when the law of God says, *Obey and assist your king*, and the faction says, *Do if you dare*; for men, in such a case, to think to divide themselves, and to pretend that their *will* obeys that law, while all besides their will obeys and serves the faction; what is this but a gross fulsome juggling with their duty, and a kind of trimming it between God and the devil?

These things I thought fit to remark to you, not out of any intemperate humour of reflecting upon the late times of confusion, (as the guilt or spite of some may suggest) but because I am satisfied in my heart and conscience, that it is vastly the concern of his Majesty, and of the peace of his government, both in church and state, that the youth of the nation (of which such auditories as this chiefly consist) should be principled and possessed with a full, fixed, and thorough persuasion of the justness and goodness of the blessed old king's cause; and of the excellent piety and christianity of those principles, upon which the loyal part of the nation adhered to him, and that against the most horrid and inexcusable rebellion, that

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was ever set on foot, and acted upon the stage of the world: of all which whosoever is not persuaded, is a rebel in his heart, and deserves not the protection which he enjoys.

And the rather do I think such remarks as these necessary of late years, because of the vile arts, and restless endeavours, used by some sly and venomous factors for the old republican cause, to poison and debauch men from their allegiance; sometimes *creeping into houses*, and sometimes *creeping into studies*; but in both equally pimping for the faction, and stealing away as many *hearts from the son*, as they had formerly employed *hands* against the *father*: and this with such success, that it cannot but be matter of very sad and melancholy reflexion to all sober and loyal minds, to consider, that several, who had stood it out, and persevered firm and unalterable Royalists in the late storm, have since (I know not by what unhappy fate) turned *trimmers* in the calm.

3. The third instance, in which men use to *plead the will instead of the deed*, shall be in duties of cost and expence.

Let a business of expensive charity be proposed; and then, as I shewed before, that in matters of labour the lazy person could not find any hands wherewith to work; so neither, in this case, can the religious miser find any hands where-

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wherewith to give. It is wonderful to consider, how a command or call to be liberal, either upon a civil or religious account, all of a sudden impoverishes the rich, breaks the merchant, shuts up every private man's exchequer, and makes those men in a minute have nothing at all to give, who, at the very same instant, want nothing to spend. So that, instead of relieving the poor, such a command strangely increases their number, and transforms rich men into beggars presently. For, let the danger of their prince and country knock at their purses, and call upon them to contribute against a publick enemy or calamity ; then immediately they have nothing, and their riches, upon such occasions (as *Solomon* expresses it) never fail to *make themselves wings, and to fly away.*

Thus, at the siege of *Constantinople*, then the wealthiest city in the world, the citizens had nothing to give their emperor for the defence of the place, tho' he begged a supply of them with tears ; but, when by that means the *Turks* took and sacked it, then those who before had nothing to give, had more than enough to lose. And in like manner, those who would not support the necessities of the old blessed king, against his villainous enemies, found that plunder could take, where disloyalty would not give ;

give; and rapine open those chests, that avarice had shut.

But, to descend to matters of daily and common occurrence; what is more usual in conversation, than for men to express their unwillingness to do a thing, by saying, *they cannot do it*; and for a covetous man, being asked a little money in charity, to answer, *that he has none*? Which as it is, if true, a sufficient answer to God and man; so, if false, it is intolerable hypocrisy towards both.

But do men in good earnest think, that God will be put off so? Or can they imagine, that the law of God will be baffled with a lye, cloathed in a scoff?

For such pretences are no better, as appears from that notable account given us by the apostle of this windy, insignificant charity of the *will*, and of the worthlessness of it, not enlivened by deeds, *Jam. ii. 16. If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful to the body; what doth it profit?* Profit, does he say? Why, it profits just as much as fair words command the market, as good wishes buy food and raiment, and pass for current payment in the shops. Come to an old, rich, professing

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Volpone, and tell him, that there is a church to be built, beautified, or endowed in such a place, and that he cannot lay out his money more to God's honour, the publick good, and the comfort of his own conscience, than to bestow it liberally upon such an occasion : And, in answer to this, it is ten to one but you shall be told, "*how much* God is for the
 " inward, spiritual worship of the heart ;
 " and that the Almighty neither dwells, nor
 " delights in temples made with hands ; but
 " hears, and accepts the prayers of his people in dens and caves, barns and stables ;
 " and in the homeliest and meanest cottages,
 " as well as in the stateliest and most magnificent *churches*." Thus, I say, you are like to be answered. In reply to which, I would have all such sly, sanctified cheats (who are so often harping upon this string) know, once for all, that that God, who accepts the prayers of his people in dens and caves, barns and stables, when, by his afflicting Providence, he has driven them from the appointed places of his solemn worship, so that they cannot have the use of them, will not, for all this, endure to be served, or prayed to by them, in such places, nor accept of their barn-worship, nor their hogsty-worship, no, nor yet of their parlour, or their chamber-worship, where
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he has given them both wealth and power to build him churches: for he that commands us to *worship him in the spirit*, commands us also to *honour him with our substance*. And never pretend that thou hast an heart to *pray*, while thou hast no heart to *give*; since he that serves *Mammon* with his estate, cannot possibly serve God with his heart: for, as in the heathen worship of God, a *sacrifice without an heart* was accounted *ominous*; so, in the christian worship of him, an *heart without a sacrifice* is worthless and impertinent.

And thus much for mens pretences of the *will*, when they are called upon to *give* upon a *religious* account; according to which, a man may be well enough said (as the common word is) to be *all heart*, and yet the arrantest miser in the world.

But come we now to this old rich pretender to godliness, in another case, and tell him, That there is such an one, a man of a good family, good education, and who has lost all his estate for the king, now ready to rot in prison for debt; come, what will you give towards his release? *Why* then, answers the *will* instead of the *deed*, as much the readier *Speaker* of the two, “*The truth is, I always had a*
“*respect for such men; I love them with*
“*all my heart; and it is a thousand pities*

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“ that any that have served the king so faithfully, should be in such *want*. ” So say I too ; and the more shame is it for the whole nation, that they should be so : but still, What will you give ? Why, then answers the man of mouth-charity again, and tells you, “ That *you could not come in a worse time ; that money is now-a-days very scarce with him, and that therefore he can give nothing ; but he will be sure to pray for the poor Gentleman.* ”

Ah, thou hypocrite ! when thy brother has lost all that ever he had, and lies languishing, and even gasping under the utmost extremities of poverty and distress ; do'st thou think thus to lick him whole again only with thy tongue ? just like that old formal hocus, who denied a beggar a farthing, and put him off with his blessing.

Why ? What are the prayers of a covetous wretch worth ? What will thy blessing go for ? What will it buy ? Is this the charity that the apostle here, in the text, presses upon the *Corinthians* ? this the case, in which God accepts the willingness of the mind, instead of the liberality of the purse ? No, assuredly : but the measures that God marks out to thy charity, are these : Thy superfluities must give place to thy neighbour's great convenience ;
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thy convenience must veil to thy neighbour's necessity ; and, lastly, thy very necessities must yield to thy neighbour's extremity.

This is the gradual process that must be thy rule ; and he that pretends a disability to give, short of this, prevaricates with his duty, and evacuates the precept. God sometimes calls upon thee to relieve the needs of thy poor brother, sometimes the necessities of thy country, and sometimes the urgent wants of thy prince : now, before thou fliest to the old, stale, usual pretence, that thou canst do none of all these things, consider with thyself, that there is a God, who is not to be flammed off with lyes, who knows exactly what thou canst do, and what thou canst not : and consider, in the next place, that it is not the best husbandry in the world, to be damned to save charges.

4. The fourth and last duty, that I shall mention, in which men use to plead want of power to do the thing they have a will to, is, the conquering of a long, inveterate ill habit or custom.

And the truth is, there is nothing that leaves a man less power to good than this does : nevertheless, that which weakens the hand, does not therefore cut it off. Some power to good, no doubt, a man has left him, for all

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this : and therefore, God will not take the drunkard's excuse, that he has so long accustomed himself to intemperate drinking, that now he cannot leave it off ; nor admit of the passionate man's apology, that he has so long given his unruly passions their head, that he cannot now govern or controul them. For these things are not so : since no man is guilty of an act of intemperance of any sort, but he might have forborne it ; not without some trouble, I confess, from the strugglings of the contrary habit : but still the thing was possible to be done ; and he might, after all, have forborne it. And, as he forbore one act, so he might have forborne another, and after that another, and so on, 'till he had, by degrees, weakened, and, at length, mortified and extinguished the habit itself. That these things, indeed, are not quickly or easily to be effected, is manifest, and nothing will be more readily granted ; and therefore the scripture itself owns so much, by expressing and representing these mortifying courses, by acts of the greatest toil and labour ; such as are, *warfare*, and *taking up the cross* : and by acts of the most terrible violence, and contrariety to nature ; such as are, *cutting off the right hand*, and *plucking out the right eye* ; things infinitely grievous and afflictive, yet still, for all that, feasible

feasible in themselves; or else, to be sure, the eternal wisdom of God would never have advised, and much less have commanded them. For, what God has commanded, must be done; and, what must be done, assuredly may be done: and therefore, all pleas of impotence, or inability, in such cases, are utterly false and impertinent, and will infallibly be thrown back in the face of such as make them.

But you will say, Does not the scripture itself acknowledge it as a thing impossible for a man, brought under the custom of sin, to forbear sinning? in *Jer. xiii. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Now if this can be no more done than the former, is it not a demonstration that it cannot be done at all?

To this I answer, That the words mentioned are *tropical* or *figurative*, and import an *hyperbole*, which is a way of expressing things beyond what really and naturally they are in themselves; and consequently, the design of this scripture, in saying that this cannot be done, is no more than to shew, that it is very hardly and very rarely done; but not, in strict truth, utterly impossible to be done.

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In vain therefore do men take sanctuary in such misunderstood expressions as these ; and from a false persuasion, that they cannot reform their lives, break off their ill customs, and root out their old, vicious habits, never so much as attempt, endeavour, or go about it. For, admit that such an habit, seated in the soul, be, as our Saviour calls it, *a strong man armed, got into possession* ; yet still he may be dispossessed and thrown out by *a stronger*, Luke xi. 21, 22. Or, be it as St. Paul calls it, *a law in our members*, Rom. vii. 23. yet certainly, ill laws may be broken and disobeyed as well as good. But if men will suffer themselves to be enslaved, and carried away by their lusts, without resistance, and wear the devil's yoke quietly, rather than be at the trouble of throwing it off, and thereupon sometimes feel their consciences galled and grieved by wearing it, they must not, from these secret stings and remorses, felt by them in the prosecution of their sins, presently conclude, that therefore their will is good, and well-disposed ; and consequently, such as God will accept, though their lives remain all the while unchanged, and as much under the dominion of sin as ever.

These reasonings, I know, lie deep in the minds of most men, and relieve and support
their

their hearts, in spite, and in the midst of their sins ; yet they are all but sophistry and delusion, and false propositions, contrived by the devil, to hold men fast in their sins by final impenitence : for, though possibly the grace of God may, in some cases, be irresistible ; yet it would be an infinite reproach to his providence, to affirm, that sin either is, or can be so. And thus I have given you four principal instances, in which men use to plead the will instead of the deed, upon a pretended impotence or disability for the deed ; namely, in duties of great labour ; in duties of much danger ; in duties of cost and expence ; and lastly, in duties requiring a resistance and an extirpation of inveterate, sinful habits.

In the neglect of all which, men relieve their consciences, by this one great fallacy running through them all, *that they mistake difficulties for impossibilities.* A pernicious mistake certainly ; and the more pernicious, for that men are seldom convinced of it, 'till their conviction can do them no good. There cannot be a weightier or more important case of conscience for men to be resolved in, than to know certainly how far God accepts the will for the deed, and how far he does not ; and withal, to be informed truly when men do really

really will a thing, and when they have really no power to do what they have willed.

For surely, it cannot but be matter of very dreadful and terrifying consideration to any one sober, and in his wits, to think seriously with himself, what horror and confusion must needs surprize that man, at the last and great day of account, who had led his whole life, and governed all his actions, by one rule, when God intends to judge him by another.

To which God, the great Searcher and Judge of hearts, and Rewarder of men according to their deeds, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

*Of the Origin, Nature, and Baseness
of the Sin of Ingratitude.*

A

S E R M O N

Preached at

CHRIST-CHURCH, *Oxon,*

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

October 17. 1675.

Of the Origin, Nature, and Effects
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SERMON XI.

Of the odious Sin of Ingratitude.

JUDGES viii. 34, 35.

And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side. Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

THESE words, being a result or judgment given upon matter of fact, naturally direct us to the foregoing story, to inform us of their occasion : The subject of which story, was that heroick and victorious judge of *Israel*, *Gideon* ; who, by the greatness of his achievements, had merited the offer of a
crown

crown and kingdom ; and, by the greatness of his mind, refused it. The whole narrative is contained and set before us in in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters of this book ; where we read, that when the children of *Israel*, according to their usual method of sinning after mercies and deliverances, and thereupon returning to a fresh enslavement to their enemies, had now passed seven years in cruel subjection to the *Midianites*, a potent and insulting enemy, and who oppressed them to that degree, that they had scarce bread to fill their mouths, or houses to cover their heads ; for, in the 2^d verse of the 5th chapter, we find them housing themselves under ground, in dens and caves ; and in *ver.* 3, 4. no sooner had they sown their corn, but we have the enemy coming up in armies, and destroying it : in this sad and calamitous condition, I say, in which one would have thought that a deliverance from such an oppressor would have even revived them, and the deliverer eternally obliged them, God raised up the spirit of this great person, and ennobled his courage and conduct with the intire overthrow of this mighty and numerous, or rather innumerable host of the *Midianites* ; and that in such a manner, and with such strange and unparalleled circumstances, that, in the whole action, the

the mercy and the miracle seemed to strive for the pre-eminence. And so quick a sense did the *Israelites*, immediately after it, seem to entertain of the merits of *Gideon*, and the obligation he had laid upon them, that they all, as one man, tender him the regal and hereditary government of that people, in the 22^d verse of this viiith chapter ; *Then said the men of Israel to Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also ; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.* To which he answered as magnanimously, and, by that answer, redoubled the obligation, in the next verse ; *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, but the Lord shall rule over you.*

Thus far then we see the workings of a just gratitude in the *Israelites* ; and goodness on the one side nobly answered with greatness on the other. And now, after so vast an obligation owned by so free an acknowledgment, could any thing be expected but a continual interchange of kindnesses, at least on their part, who had been so infinitely obliged, and so gloriously delivered ? Yet, in the ixth chapter, we find these very men turning the sword of *Gideon* into his own bowels ; cutting off the very race and posterity of their deliverer, by the slaughter of threescore and ten of his
sons,

sons, and setting up the son of his concubine, the blot of his family, and the monument of his shame, to reign over them ; and all this without the least provocation or offence given them, either by *Gideon* himself, or by any of his house. After which horrid fact, I suppose we can no longer wonder at this unlook'd for account given of the *Israelites*, in the text ; *that they remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side. Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.*

The truth is, they were all along a cross, odd, untoward sort of people, and such as God seems to have chosen, and (as the prophets sometimes phrase it) to have espoused to himself, upon the very same account that *Socrates* espoused *Xantippe*, only for her extreme ill conditions, above all that he could possibly find or pick out of that sex ; and so the fittest argument both to exercise and declare his admirable patience to the world.

The words of the text are a charge given in against the *Israelites* ; a charge of that foul and odious sin of *ingratitude* ; and that both towards God, and towards man : towards God in the 34th verse, and towards man in the 35th :
such

such being ever the growing contagion of this ill quality, that if it begins at God, it naturally descends to men; and if it first exerts itself upon men, it infallibly ascends to God. If we consider it as directed against God, it is a breach of religion; if as to men, it is an offence against morality. The passage from one to the other is very easy: breach of duty towards our neighbour, still involving in it a breach of duty towards God too; and no man's religion ever survives his morals.

My purpose is, from this remarkable subject and occasion, to treat of *ingratitude*, and that chiefly in this latter sense; and from the case of the *Israelites* towards *Gideon*, to traverse the nature, principles and properties of this detestable vice; and so drawing before your eyes the several lineaments and parts of it, from the ugly aspect of the picture, to leave it to your own hearts to judge of the original.

For the effecting of which, I shall do these following things:

I. I shall shew what *gratitude* is, and upon what the obligation to it is grounded.

II. I shall give some account of the nature and baseness of *ingratitude*.

III. I shall shew the principle from which *ingratitude* proceeds.

IV. I shall shew those ill qualities that inseparably attend it, and are never disjoined from it. And,

V. And lastly, I shall draw some useful inferences, by way of application, from the premises.

I. And first for the first of these: *What gratitude is, and upon what the obligation to it is grounded.*

“ Gratitude is properly a virtue, disposing
 “ the mind to an inward sense, and an outward
 “ acknowledgment of a benefit received, to-
 “ gether with a readiness to return the same,
 “ or the like, as the occasions of the doer of
 “ it shall require, and the abilities of the re-
 “ ceiver extend to.”

This, to me, seems to contain a full description, or rather definition of this virtue: from which it appears, that gratitude includes in it these three parts :

1. A particular observation, or taking notice of a *kindness* received, and consequently of the good will and affection of the person who *did* that *kindness*. For still, in this case, the mind of the giver is more to be attended to, than the matter of the gift; it being this that stamps it properly a favour, and gives it the noble and endearing denomination of a *kindness*.

2. The second part of gratitude is that which brings it from the heart into the mouth, and makes a man express the sense he has of the benefit done him by thanks, acknowledgments, and gratulations; and where the heart is full of the one, it will certainly overflow, and run over in the other.

3. The third and last is, an endeavour to recompense our benefactor, and to do something that may redound to *his advantage*, in consideration of what he has done towards *ours*. I state it upon *endeavour*, and not upon *effect*; for this latter may be often impossible. But it is in the power of every one to do as much as he can; to make some essay, at least, some offer and attempt this way; so as to shew, that there is a spring of motion within, and that the heart is not idle or insensible, but that it is full and big, and knows itself to be so, tho' it wants *strength to bring forth*. Having thus shewn *what gratitude is*, the next thing is to shew the *obligation that it brings upon a man*, and the ground and reason of that obligation.

As for the obligation, I know no moralists or casuists, that treat scholastically of *justice*, but treat of gratitude under that general head, as a part or *species* of it. And the nature and office of justice being to dispose the mind to a

constant and perpetual readiness to render to every man his due, *suum cuique tribuere*, it is evident, that if gratitude be a part of justice, it must be conversant about something that is due to another: and whatsoever is so, must be so by the force of some law. Now, all law that a man is capable of being obliged by, is reducible to one of these three.

1. The law of nature. 2. The positive law of God, revealed in his word. 3. The law of man, enacted by the civil power for the preservation and good of society.

1. And first for the law of nature, which I take to be nothing else, but the mind of God signified to a rational agent by the bare discourse of his reason, and dictating to him, that he ought to act suitably to the principles of his nature, and to those relations that he stands under. For every thing sustains both an absolute, and a relative capacity: an absolute, as it is such a thing endued with such a nature; and a relative, as it is a part of the universe, and so stands in such an order and relation both to the whole, and to the rest of the parts.

After which, the next consideration immediately subsequent to the being of a thing, is what agrees, or disagrees with that thing; what is suitable, or unsuitable to it; and from this springs the notion of decency or indecency; that

that which becomes or misbecomes, and is the same with *honestum* & *turpe*. Which decency, or τὸ πρέπον, (as the *Greeks* term it) imports a certain measure or proportion of one thing to another; which to transgress, is to do contrary to the natural order of things; the preservation of which is properly that rule or law, by which every thing ought to act; and consequently, the violation of it implies a turpitude or indecency. Now those actions that are suitable to a rational nature, and to that πρέπον, that *decency* or *honestum* belonging to it, are contained and expressed in certain maxims or propositions, which, upon the repeated exercise of a man's reason about such objects as come before him, do naturally result, and are collected from thence; and so remaining upon his mind, become both a rule to direct, and a law to oblige him in the whole course of his actions. Such are these maxims: *That the Supreme Being, Cause, and Governor of all things, ought to be worshipped, and depended upon. That parents are to be honoured. That a man should do as he would be done by.* From which last alone may sufficiently be deduced all those rules of charity and justice, that are to govern the offices of common life; and which alone is enough to found an obligation to gratitude: forasmuch as no man, having done a kindness to another, would acquiesce,

or think himself justly dealt with, in a total neglect and unconcernedness of the person who had received that kindness from him ; and consequently, neither ought he to be unconcerned in the same case himself.

But I shall, from other and nearer principles, and those the unquestionable documents and dictates of the law of nature, evince the obligation and debt lying upon every man to shew gratitude, where he has received a benefit. Such as are these propositions :

(1.) That according to the rule of natural justice, one man may merit and deserve of another. (2.) That whosoever deserves of another, makes something due to him from the person of whom he deserves. (3.) That one man's deserving of another is founded upon his conferring on him some good, to which that other had no right or claim. (4.) That no man has any antecedent right or claim to that which comes to him by free-gift. (5.) And lastly, That all desert imports an equality between the good conferred, and the good deserved, or made due. From whence it follows, that he who confers a good upon another, deserves, and consequently has a claim to an equal good from the person upon whom it was conferred. So that from hence, by the law of nature, springs a debt ; the acknowledging
and

and repaying of which debt (as a man shall be able) is the proper office and work of gratitude.

As certain therefore, as by the law of nature there may be, and often is, such a thing as *merit*, and as *desert*, from one man to another; and as *desert* gives the person deserving a right or claim to *some good* from the person of whom he deserves; and as a right in one to claim this good, infers a debt and obligation in the other to pay it: so certain it is, by a direct gradation of consequences from this principle of merit, that the obligation to gratitude flows from, and is enjoined by, the first dictates of nature. And the truth is, the greatest and most sacred ties of duty, that man is capable of, are founded upon gratitude. Such as are the duties of a child to his parent, and of a subject to his sovereign: from the former of which there is required love and honour, in recompence of being; and from the latter, obedience and subjection, in recompence of protection and well-being. And in general, if the conferring of a kindness did not bind the person upon whom it was conferred, to the returns of gratitude; why, in the universal dialect of the world, are *kindnesses* still called *obligations*?

And thus much for the first ground, enforcing the obligations of gratitude; namely, the *law of nature*. In the next place,

2. As for the *positive law of God revealed in his word*, it is evident that gratitude must needs be enjoined and made necessary, by all those scriptures that upbraid or forbid ingratitude; as, in 2 *Tim. iii. 2.* the unthankful stand reckoned among the highest and most enormous sinners; which sufficiently evinces the virtue opposite to unthankfulness to bear the same place in the rank of duties, that its contrary does in the catalogue of sins. And the like, by consequence, is inferred from all those places, in which we are commanded to *love our enemies*, and to *do good to those that hate us*: and therefore certainly much more are we by the same commanded to *do good to those* that have prevented us with good, and actually obliged us. So that it is manifest, that by the positive written law of God, *no less than by the law of nature*, gratitude is a debt.

3. In the third and last place; as for the *laws of men, enacted by the civil power*, it must be confessed, that gratitude is not enforced by them: I say, not enforced; that is, not enjoined by the sanction of penalties, to be inflicted upon the person that shall not be found grateful. I grant indeed, that many actions
are

are punished by law, that are acts of ingratitude; but this is merely accidental to them, as they are such acts; for, if they were punished properly under that notion, and upon that account, the punishment would equally reach all actions of the same kind; but they are punished and provided against by law, as they are gross and dangerous violations of societies, and that common good, that it is the business of the civil laws of all nations to protect, and to take care of: which good not being violated or endangered by every omission of gratitude between man and man, the laws make no peculiar provision to secure the exercise of this virtue; but leave it, as they found it, sufficiently enjoined, and made a duty by the law of God and nature.

Tho', in the *Roman* law indeed, there is this particular provision against the breach of this duty in case of slaves: That if a lord manumits, and makes free his slave, gross ingratitude in the person so made free, forfeits his freedom, and re-asserts him to his former condition of slavery; tho', perhaps, even this also, upon an accurate consideration, will be found not a provision against ingratitude, properly and formally as such; but as it is the ingratitude of slaves, which, if left unpunished in a commonwealth, where it was the custom for men

to

to be served by slaves, as in *Rome* it was, would quickly have been a publick nuisance and disturbance; for such is the peculiar insolence of this sort of men, such the incorrigible vileness of all slavish spirits, that tho' freedom may rid them of the baseness of their condition, yet it never takes off the baseness of their minds.

And now, having shewn both what gratitude is, and the ground and reasons of mens obligation to it; we have a full account of the proper and particular nature of this virtue, as consisting adequately in these two things: first, That *it is a debt*; and secondly, That it is such a debt as is left to every man's ingenuity, (in respect of any legal coercion) *whether he will pay or no*; for there lies no action of debt against him, if he will not. He is in danger of no arrest, bound over to no assize, nor forced to hold up his unworthy hand (the instrument of his ingratitude) at any bar.

And this it is, that shews the rare and distinguishing excellency of gratitude, and sets it as a crown upon the head of all other virtues, that it should plant such an over-ruling generosity in the heart of man, as shall more effectually incline him to what is brave and becoming, than the terror of any penal law whatsoever. So that he shall feel a greater force upon himself from within, and from the controul of his

own

own principles, to engage him to do worthily, than all threatnings and punishments, racks and tortures can have upon a low and servile mind, that never acts virtuously, but as it is acted; that knows no principle of doing well but fear; no conscience but constraint. On the contrary, the grateful person fears no court or judge, no sentence or executioner, but what he carries about him in his own breast: and being still the most severe exactor of himself, not only confesses, but proclaims his debts; his ingenuity is his bond, and his conscience a thousand witnesses: so that the debt must needs be sure, yet he scorns to be sued for it; nay, rather he is always suing, importuning, and even reproaching himself, till he can clear accounts with his benefactor. His heart is (as it were) in continual labour; it even travails with the obligation, and is in pangs, till it be delivered: and, as *David* (in the overflowing sense of God's goodness to him) cries out in the cxvth *psalm*, verse 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* so the grateful person, pressed down under the apprehension of any great kindness done him, eases his burdened mind a little by such expostulations with himself as these: "What shall I
 " do for such a friend, for such a patron, who
 " has so frankly, so generously, so unconstrain-
 " edly

“ edly relieved me in such a distress ; sup-
 “ ported me against such an enemy ; supplied,
 “ cherished, and upheld me, when relations
 “ would not know me, or at least could not
 “ help me ; and, in a word, has prevented
 “ my desires, and out-done my necessities ?
 “ I can never do enough for him ; my own
 “ conscience would spit in my face, should I
 “ ever slight or forget such favours.” These
 are the expostulating dialogues and contests
 that every grateful, every truly noble and mag-
 nanimous person has with himself. It was,
 in part, a brave speech of *Luc. Cornelius Sylla*,
 the *Roman* dictator, who said, that *he found*
no sweetness in being great or powerful, but
only that it enabled him to crush his enemies,
and to gratify his friends.

I cannot warrant or defend the first part of
 this saying ; but surely he that employs his
 greatness in the latter, be he never so great,
 it must and will make him still greater.

And thus much for the first general thing
 proposed ; which was to shew *what* gratitude
is, and upon what the obligation to it is grounded.
 I proceed now to the second ; which is,

II. *To give some account of the nature and*
baseness of ingratitude.

There is not any one vice, or ill quality inci-
 dent to the mind of man, against which the
 world

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world has raised such a loud and universal outcry, as against *ingratitude*: a vice never mentioned by any heathen writer, but with a particular height of detestation; and of such a malignity, that human nature must be stripped of humanity itself, before it can be guilty of it: it is instead of all other vices; and, in the balance of morality a counterpoise to them all. In the charge of *ingratitude*, *Omnia dixeris*: it is one great blot upon all morality: it is all in a word: it says *Amen* to the black roll of sins: it gives completion and confirmation to them all.

If we would state the nature of it, recourse must be had to what has been already said of its contrary; and so *it is properly an insensibility of kindnesses received, without any endeavour either to acknowledge or repay them.*

To repay them, indeed, by a return equivalent, is not in every one's power, and consequently, cannot be his duty; but thanks are a tribute payable by the poorest: the most forlorn *widow* has her *two mites*; and there is none so indigent, but has an heart to be sensible of, and a tongue to express its sense of a benefit received.

For surely, nature gives no man a mouth to be always eating, and never saying grace; nor an hand, only to grasp, and to receive:

but

but as it is furnished with teeth for the one, so it should have a tongue also for the other : and the hands that are so often reach'd out to take, and to accept, should be sometimes lifted up also to bless. The world is maintained by intercourse ; and the whole course of nature is a great exchange, in which one good turn is and ought to be the stated price of another.

If you consider the universe as one body, you shall find society and conversation to supply the office of the blood and spirits ; and it is *gratitude* that makes them circulate : look over the whole creation, and you shall see, that the band or cement that holds together all the parts of this great and glorious fabrick, is *gratitude*, or something like it : you may observe in all the elements ; for does not the air feed the flame ? and does not the flame at the same time warm and enlighten the air ? Is not the sea always sending forth, as well as taking in ? and does not the earth quit scores with all the elements, in the noble fruits and productions that issue from it ? And in all the light and influence that the heavens bestow upon this lower world, though the lower world cannot equal their benefaction, yet with a kind of grateful return, it reflects those rays that it cannot recompense : so that there is some return however, though there
can

can be no requital. He who has a soul wholly void of *gratitude*, should do well to set his soul to learn of his body ; for all the parts of that minister to one another : the hands, and all the other limbs, labour to bring in food and provision to the stomach, and the stomach returns what it has received from them, in strength and nutriment diffused into all the parts and members of the body. It would be endless to pursue the like allusions : In short, *gratitude* is the great spring that sets all the wheels of nature a going ; and the whole universe is supported by giving and returning, by commerce and commutation.

And now, thou ungrateful brute, thou blemish to mankind, and reproach to thy creation ! what shall we say of thee, or to what shall we compare thee ? for thou art an exception from all the visible world ; neither the heavens above, nor the earth beneath, afford any thing like thee : and therefore, if thou wouldest find thy parallel, go to hell, which is both the region and the emblem of *ingratitude* ; for besides thyself, there is nothing but hell, that is always receiving, and never restoring.

And thus much for *the nature and baseness of ingratitude*, as it has been represented in the description given of it. Come we now to the

III. *Third thing proposed, which is, to shew the principle from which it proceeds.* And to give you this in one word ; it proceeds from that which we call ill-nature : which being a word that occurs frequently in discourse, and in the characters given of persons, it will not be amiss to inquire into the proper sense and signification of this expression. In order to which, we must observe, that, according to the doctrine of the philosopher, man being a creature designed and framed by nature for society and conversation, such a temper or disposition of mind, as inclines him to those actions that promote society, and mutual fellowship, is properly called good-nature : which actions, though almost innumerable in their particulars, yet seem reducible in general to two principles of action :

1. A proneness to do good to others.
2. A ready sense of any good done by others.

And where these two meet together, as they are scarce ever found asunder, it is impossible for that person not to be kind, beneficial, and obliging to all whom he converses with. On the contrary, ill-nature is such a disposition as inclines a man to those actions that thwart, and sour, and disturb conversation between man and man ; and accordingly consists

consists of two qualities directly contrary to the former :

1. *A proneness to do ill turns, attended with a complacency, or secret joy of mind, upon the sight of any mischief that befalls another.* And,

2. *An utter insensibility of any good or kindness done him by others.* I mean, not that he is insensible of the good itself ; but that, altho' he finds, feels, and enjoys the good that is done him, yet he is wholly insensible, and unconcerned, to value or take notice of the benignity of him that does it.

Now either of these ill qualities, and much more both of them together, denominate a person ill-natured ; they being such as make him grievous and uneasy to all whom he deals and associates himself with : for, from the former of these, proceed envy, an aptness to slander and revile, to cross and hinder a man in his lawful advantages ; for these and such-like actions feed and gratify that base humour of mind, which gives a man a delight in making, at least in seeing his neighbour miserable : and from the latter, issues that vile thing which we have been hitherto speaking of, to wit, *ingratitude*, into which all kindnesses and good turns fall as into a kind of dead sea : it being a quality that confines, and (as it were) shuts up a man wholly

within himself, leaving him void of that principle, which alone would dispose him to communicate and impart those redundancies of good that he is possessed of. No man ever goes sharer with the ungrateful person ; be he never so full, he never runs over ; but (like *Gideon's fleece*) though filled and replenished with the dew of heaven himself, yet he leaves all dry and empty about him.

Now this surely, if any thing, is an effect of ill-nature. And what is ill-nature, but a pitch beyond original corruption ? It is *corruptio pessimi* ; a farther depravation of that, which was stark naught before : but so certainly does it shoot forth, and shew itself in this vice, that wheresoever you see *ingratitude*, you may as infallibly conclude that there is a growing stock of ill-nature in that breast, as you may know that man to have the plague, upon whom you see the tokens.

Having thus shewn you *from whence this ill quality proceeds* ; pass we now to the

IV. *Fourth* thing proposed, which is, to shew those ill qualities that inseparably attend ingratitude, and are never disjoined from it.

It is a saying common in use, and true in observation, That the disposition and temper of a man may be gathered as well from his companion or associate, as from himself. And

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it holds in qualities, as it does in persons : it being seldom or never known, that any great virtue or vice went alone ; for greatness in every thing will still be attended on.

How black and base a vice *ingratitude* is, we have seen, by considering it both in its own nature, and in the principle from which it springs ; and we may see the same yet more fully in those vices which it is always in combination with : two of which I shall mention, as being of near cognation to it, and constant coherence with it ; the first of which is *pride* ; and the second, *hard-heartedness*, or *want of compassion*.

1. And first, for *pride* : This is of such intimate, and even essential connexion with *ingratitude*, that the actings of *ingratitude* seem directly resolvable into *pride*, as the principal reason and cause of them. The original ground of man's obligation to *gratitude*, was (as I have hinted) from this, that each man has but a limited right to the good things of the world ; and that the natural allowed way by which he is to compass the possession of these things, is by his own industrious acquisition of them : and consequently, when any good is dealt forth to him any other way, than by his own labour, he is accountable to the person who dealt it to him, as for a thing to

which he had no right or claim by any action of his own entitling him to it.

But now, *pride* shuts a man's eyes against all this, and so fills him with an opinion of his own transcendent worth, that he imagines himself to have a right to all things, as well those that are the effects and fruits of other mens labours as of his own : so that if any advantage accrues to him by the liberality and donation of his neighbour, he looks not upon it as a matter of free, undeserved gift, but rather as a just homage to that worth and merit which he conceives to be in himself, and to which all the world ought to become tributary ; upon which thought, no wonder if he reckons himself wholly unconcerned to acknowledge or repay any good that he receives : for while the courteous person thinks that he is obliging and doing such an one a kindness, the proud person, on the other side, accounts him to be only paying a debt : his pride makes him even worship and idolize himself : and indeed, every proud, ungrateful man has this property of an idol, that though he is plied with never so many, and so great offerings, yet he takes no notice of the offerer at all.

Now this is the true account of the most inward movings and reasonings of the very heart

heart and soul of an ungrateful person : so that you may rest upon this as a proposition of an eternal, unfailing truth, That there neither is, nor ever was any person remarkably ungrateful, who was not also insufferably proud ; nor, convertibly, any one proud, who was not equally ungrateful : for as snakes breed in dunghils not singly, but in knots ; so, in such base, noisome hearts, you shall ever see *pride* and *ingratitude* indivisibly *wreathed and twisted together* : *Ingratitude overlooks all kindneffes* ; but it is, because *pride makes it carry its head so high*.

See the greatest examples of *ingratitude* equally notorious for their pride and ambition. And to begin with the top and father of them all, the devil himself : That excellent and glorious nature which God had obliged him with, could not prevent his ingratitude and apostasy, when his pride bid him aspire to an equality with his Maker, and say, *I will ascend, and be like the Most High*. And did not our first parents write exactly after his copy ? *ingratitude* making them to trample upon the command, because *pride* made them desire *to be as gods*, and to brave Omniscience itself in the knowledge of *good and evil* ? What made that ungrateful wretch *Absalom* kick at all the kindneffes of his indulgent father, but

because his ambition would needs be fingering the sceptre, and hoisting him into his father's throne ? And in the courts of princes is there any thing more usual, than to see those that have been raised by the favour and interest of some great minister, to trample upon the steps by which they rose, to rival him in his greatness, and at length (if possible) to step into his place ?

In a word, *ingratitude is too base to return a kindness, and too proud to regard it* : much like the tops of mountains, barren indeed, but yet lofty ; they produce nothing, they feed no body, they cloath no body, yet are high and stately, and look down upon all the world about them.

2. The other concomitant of *ingratitude*, is *hard-heartedness*, or *want of compassion*. This, at first, may seem to have no great cognation with *ingratitude* : but, upon a due inspection into the nature of that ill quality, it will be found directly to follow it, if not also to result from it.

For the nature of *ingratitude* being founded in such a disposition, as incloses all a man's concerns within himself, and consequently gives him a perfect unconcernedness in all things not judged by him immediately to relate to his own interest ; it is no wonder if
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the same temper of mind, which makes a man unapprehensive of any good done him by others, makes him equally unapprehensive and insensible of any evil or misery suffered by others : no such thought ever strikes his marble, obdurate heart, but it presently flies off and rebounds from it. And the truth is, it is impossible for a man to be perfect, and thorough-paced in *ingratitude*, 'till he has shook off all fetters of pity and compassion : for all relenting and tenderness of heart makes a man but a puny in this sin ; it spoils the growth, and cramps the last and crowning exploits of this vice.

Ingratitude, indeed, put the poniard into *Brutus's* hand ; but it was want of compassion which thrust it into *Cæsar's* heart. When some fond, easy fathers think fit to strip themselves before they lie down to their long sleep, and to settle their whole estates upon their sons, has it not been too frequently seen, that the father has been requited with want and beggary, scorn and contempt ? But now, could bare *ingratitude* (think we) ever have made any one so unnatural and diabolical, had not cruelty, and want of pity, come in as a second to his assistance, and cleared the villain's breast of all remainders of humanity ? Is it not this which has made so many miserable parents

even curse their own bowels, for bringing forth children that seem to have none? Did not this make *Agrippina*, *Nero's* mother, cry out to the assassin sent by her son to murder her, to direct his sword to her belly, as being the only criminal for having brought forth such a monster of ingratitude into the world? And, to give you yet a higher instance of the conjunction of these two vices, since nothing could transcend the ingratitude and cruelty of *Nero*, but the ingratitude and cruelty of an imperious woman; when *Tullia*, daughter of *Servilius Tullius* sixth king of *Rome*, having married *Tarquinius Superbus*, and put him first upon killing her father, and then invading his throne, came through the street where the body of her father lay newly murdered, and wallowing in his blood, she commanded her trembling coachman to drive his chariot and horses over the body of her king and father triumphantly, in the face of all *Rome* looking upon her with astonishment and detestation: such was the tenderness, gratitude, filial affection, and good-nature of this weaker vessel.

And then for instances out of sacred story; to go no farther than this of *Gideon*; Did not *ingratitude* first make the *Israelites* forget the kindness of the father, and then cruelty make them

them imbrue their hands in the blood of his sons? Could *Pharaoh's* butler so quickly have forgot *Joseph*, had not want of gratitude to him, as his friend, met with an equal want of compassion to him, as his fellow-prisoner? A poor, innocent, forlorn stranger, languishing in durance, upon the false accusations of a lying, insolent, whorish woman?

I might even weary you with examples of the like nature, both sacred and civil, all of them representing ingratitude (as it were) sitting in its throne, with pride at its right hand, and cruelty at its left; worthy supporters of such a stately quality, such a reigning impiety!

And it has been sometimes observed, that persons signally and eminently obliged, yet missing of the utmost of their greedy designs in swallowing both gifts and giver too, instead of thanks for received kindneses, have betook themselves to barbarous threatnings for defeat of their insatiable expectations.

Upon the whole matter, we may firmly conclude, that ingratitude and compassion never cohabit in the same breast. Which remark I do here so much insist upon, to shew the superlative malignity of this vice, and the baseness of the mind in which it dwells: for we may with great confidence, and equal truth, affirm, that since there was such a thing as mankind
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in the world, there never was any heart truly great and generous, that was not also tender and compassionate. It is this noble quality, that makes all men to be of one kind: for every man would be (as it were) a distinct species to himself, were there no sympathy amongst individuals.

And thus I have done with the fourth thing proposed, and shewn the two vices that inseparably attend ingratitude. And now, if falsehood also should chance to strike in as the third, and make up the triumvirate of its attendants, so that ingratitude, pride, cruelty, and falsehood should all meet together, and join forces in the same person; as not only very often, but for the most part they do; in this case, if the devils themselves should take bodies, and come and live amongst us, they could not be greater plagues and grievances to society, than such persons.

From what has been said, let no man ever think to meet ingratitude single and alone. It is one of those *grapes of gall* mentioned by Moses, *Deut. xxxii. 32.* and therefore expect always to find it *one of a cluster*. I proceed now to the

V. *Fifth and last thing proposed, which is, to draw some useful consequences, by way of application, from the premises.* As,

1. Never enter into a league of friendship with an ungrateful person: that is, plant not thy friendship upon a dunghil; it is too noble a plant for so base a soil.

Friendship consists properly in mutual offices, and a generous strife in alternate acts of kindness: but he who does a kindness to an ungrateful person, sets his seal to a flint, and sows his seed upon the sand; upon the former he makes no impression, and from the latter he finds no production.

The only voice of ingratitude is, *Give, give*; but, when the gift is once received, then, like the swine at his trough, it is silent and insatiable. In a word, the ungrateful person is a monster which is *all* throat and belly; a kind of thorough-fare, or common-sewer, for the good things of the world to pass into; and of whom, in respect of all kindnesses conferred on him, may be verified that observation of the lion's den; before which appeared the footsteps of many that had gone in thither, but no prints of any that ever came out thence. The ungrateful person is the only thing in nature, for which nobody living is the better. He lives to himself, and subsists by the good-nature of others, of which he himself has not the least grain. He is a mere encroachment upon society, and consequently ought to be thrust

thrust out of the world, as a pest, and a prodigy, and a creature of the devil's making, and not of God's.

2. As a man tolerably discreet ought by no means to attempt the making of such an one his friend; so neither is he, in the next place, to presume to think that he shall be able so much as to alter or meliorate the humour of an ungrateful person by any acts of kindness, tho' never so frequent, never so obliging.

Philosophy will teach the learned, and experience may teach all, that it is a thing hardly feasible: for love such an one, and he shall despise you; commend him, and, as occasion serves, he shall revile you; give to him, and he shall but laugh at your easiness; save his life, but, when you have done, look to your own.

The greatest favours to such an one are but like the motion of a ship upon the waves; they leave no trace, no sign behind them; they neither soften, nor win upon him; they neither melt, nor endear him; but leave him as hard, as rugged, and as unconcerned as ever. All *kindnesses* descend upon such a temper, as showers of rain, or rivers of fresh water, falling into the main sea: the sea swallows them all, but is not at all changed or sweetened by them. I may truly say of the mind of an ungrateful

grateful person, that it is *kindness-proof*. It is impenetrable, unconquerable; unconquerable by that which conquers all things else, even by love itself. Flints may be melted, (we see it daily) but an ungrateful heart cannot; no, not by the strongest and the noblest flame. After all your attempts, all your experiments, for any thing that man can do, *he that is ungrateful, will be ungrateful still*. And the reason is manifest; for you may remember, that I told you, that ingratitude sprang from a principle of *ill-nature*; which being a thing founded in such a certain constitution of blood and spirit, as, being *born* with a man into the world, and upon that account called *nature*, shall prevent all remedies that can be applied by education, and leaves such a byas upon the mind, as is before-hand with all instruction.

So that you shall seldom or never meet with an ungrateful person, but, if you look backward, and trace him up to his original, you will find, that he was *born so*; and, if you could look forward enough, it is a thousand to one, but you would find, that he also *dies so*: for you shall never light upon an *ill-natured man*, who was not also an *ill-natured child*; and gave several testimonies of his being so, to discerning persons, long before the use of his reason.

The thread that nature spins, is seldom broken off by any thing but death. I do not by this limit the operation of God's grace, for that may do wonders ; but, humanly speaking, and according to the method of the world, and the little correctives supplied by art and discipline, it seldom fails but an ill principle has its course, and nature makes good its blow : and therefore, where *ingratitude* begins remarkably to shew itself, he surely judges most wisely, who takes the alarm betimes ; and arguing the fountain from the stream, concludes that there is ill-nature at the bottom ; and so reducing his judgment into practice, timely withdraws his frustraneous, baffled kindneses, and sees the folly of endeavouring to stroke a tyger into a lamb, or to court an *Ethiopian* out of his colour.

3. In the third and last place : Whereforever you see a man notoriously ungrateful, rest assured that there is no true *sense* of religion in that person. You know the apostle's argument, in 1 *John* iv. 20. *He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?* So, by an exact parity of reason, we may argue ; If a man has no sense of those kindneses that pass upon him, from one like himself, whom he sees and knows, and converses with sensibly ; how much

much less shall his heart be affected with the grateful sense of His favours, whom he converses with only by imperfect speculations, by the discourses of reason, or the discoveries of faith ; neither of which equal the quick and lively impressions of sense ? If the apostle's reasoning was good and concluding, I am sure this must be unavoidable.

But the thing is too evident to need any proof : For shall that man pass for a proficient in Christ's school, who would have been exploded in the school of *Zeno* or *Epietetus* ? Or shall He pretend to *religious* attainments, who is defective and short in moral ? which yet are but the rudiments, the beginnings, and first draught of religion ; as religion is the perfection, the refinement, and the sublimation of morality : so that it still presupposes it, it builds upon it ; and grace never adds the superstructure, where virtue has not laid the foundation : there may be virtue, indeed, and yet no grace ; but grace is never without virtue : and therefore, though gratitude does not infer grace, it is certain that ingratitude does exclude it.

Think not to put God off by frequenting prayers, and sermons, and sacraments, while thy brother has an action against thee in the court of heaven ; an action of debt, of that clamorous

clamorous and great debt of *gratitude* : rather, as our Saviour commands, *Leave thy gift upon the altar*, and first go and clear accounts with thy brother. God scorns *a gift from him who has not paid his debts*. Every ungrateful person, in the sight of God and man, is a thief ; and let him not make the altar his receiver. Where there is no charity, it is certain there can be no religion : and can that man be charitable, who is not so much as just ?

In every benefaction between man and man, man is only the dispenser, but God the benefactor : and therefore, let all ungrateful ones know, that where *gratitude* is the debt, God himself is the chief Creditor ; who, though he causes *his sun to shine*, and *his rain to fall upon the evil and unthankful in this world*, has another kind of reward for their *unthankfulness* in the next.

To which God, the great Searcher and Judge of hearts, and Rewarder of men according to their deeds, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

Of the Nature, Malignity, and pernicious Effects of Falshood and Lying.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at

CHRIST-CHURCH, *Oxon,*

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

October 14. 1688.

At the Annual Meeting of the
Officers of the Church of Christ,
I, the undersigned, do hereby certify
that the following is a true and
correct copy of the minutes of the
meeting held on the 1st day of
January, 1888.

S E R M O N

Preached at
CHRIST CHURCH, OAKLAND,
CALIFORNIA, on the 1st day of
January, 1888.

By the
UNIVERSITY

OF THE
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA,
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SERMON XII.

Of the base Sins of Falshood and Lying.

PROV. xii. 22.

*Lying lips are abomination to the
Lord.*

I Am very sensible, that by discoursing of *lyes* and *falsehood*, which I have pitched upon for my present subject, I must need fall into a very large common place ; though yet, not by half so large and common as the practice : nothing in nature being so universally decried, and withal so universally practised, as *falsehood* ; so that most of those things, that have the mightiest and most controuling influence upon the affairs and course of the world, are neither better nor worse than downright *lies*. For, what is common fame, which

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sounds from all quarters of the world, and resounds back to them again, but generally a loud, rattling, impudent, over-bearing *lye*? What are most of the *histories* of the world, but *lies*; *lies* immortalized, and consigned over as a perpetual abuse and flim upon posterity? What are most of the *promises* of the world, but *lies*? of which we need no other proof, but our own experience. And what are most of the *oaths* in the world, but *lies*? and such as need rather a pardon for being took, than a dispensation from being kept. And, lastly, what are all the *religions* of the world, except judaism and christianity, but *lies*? And even in christianity itself, are there not those who teach, warrant, and defend *lying*; and scarce use the Bible for any other purpose, but to *swear upon it*, and to *lye against it*?

Thus a mighty, governing *lye* goes round the world, and has almost banished *truth* out of it; and so reigning triumphantly in its stead, is the true source of most of those confusions, and dire calamities, that infest and plague the universe: for look over them all, and you shall find, that the greatest annoyance and disturbance of mankind has been from one of these two things, *force*, or *fraud*; of which, as boisterous and violent a thing as
force

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force is, yet it rarely atchieves any thing considerable, but under the conduct of fraud : *sleight of hand* has done that which *force of hand* could never do.

But why do we speak of hands ? It is the tongue that drives the world before it ; the tongue, and the *lying lip*, which there is no fence against : for when that is the *weapon*, a man may strike where he cannot reach ; and a word shall do execution both farther and deeper than the mightiest blow. For the hand can hardly lift up itself high enough to strike, but it must be seen, so that it warns while it threatens : but a false, insidious tongue may whisper a lye so close and low, that though you have *ears to hear*, *you shall not hear* ; and indeed, we generally come to know it, not by *hearing*, but by *feeling* what it says.

A man perhaps casts his eye this way and that way, and looks round about him to 'spy out his enemy, and to defend himself ; but, alas ! the fatal mischief, that would trip up his heels, is all the while under them : it works invisibly, and beneath ; and the shocks of an earthquake (we know) are much more dreadful than the highest and loudest blusters of a storm : for there may be some shelter against the *violence* of the one, but no security against the *hollowness* of the other, which

never opens its bosom, but for a killing embrace. The *bowels* of the earth, in such cases, and the *mercies* of the false in all, being equally without compassion.

Upon the whole matter, it is hard to assign any one thing, but *lying*, which God and man so unanimously join in the hatred of ; and it is as hard to tell, whether it does a greater dishonour to God, or mischief to man ; it is certainly *an abomination to both*, and I hope to make it appear such in the following discourse : though I must confess myself very unable to speak to the utmost latitude of this subject ; and I thank God that I am so.

Now the words of the text are a plain, intire, categorical proposition ; and therefore I shall not go about to darken them by any needless explication, but shall immediately cast the prosecution of them under these three following particulars : As,

I. I shall inquire into the *nature* of a *lye*, and the proper essential malignity of all *falsehood*.

II. I shall shew the pernicious effects of it. And,

III. and *lastly*, I shall lay before you the *rewards* and *punishments* that will certainly attend, or, at least, follow it.

Every

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Every one of which, I suppose, and much more all of them together, will afford arguments, more than sufficient, to prove (though it were no part of holy scripture) that *lying lips are abomination to the Lord.*

And, first, for the first of these :

I. *What a lye is, and wherein the nature of it does consist.* A lye is properly an outward signification of something contrary to, or at least beside the inward sense of the mind ; so that when one thing is signified or expressed, and the same thing not meant or intended, that is properly a lye.

And forasmuch as God has endued man with a power or faculty to institute or appoint signs of his thoughts ; and that, by virtue hereof, he can appoint not only words, but also things, actions, and gestures, to be signs of the inward thoughts and conceptions of his mind ; it is evident, that he may as really lye and deceive by actions and gestures, as he can by words : forasmuch as, in the nature of them, they are as capable of being made signs ; and consequently, of being as much abused and misapplied as the other : though, for distinction sake, a deceiving by words, is commonly called a lye ; and a deceiving by actions, gestures, or behaviour, is called *simulation*, or *hypocrisy*.

The nature of a *lye*, therefore, consists in this, that it is a *false signification knowingly and voluntarily used*; in which the sign expressing is no ways agreeing with the thought or conception of the mind pretended to be thereby expressed: for words signify not immediately and primely *things themselves*, but the *conceptions of the mind* concerning *things*; and therefore, if there be an agreement between our words and our thoughts, we do not speak falsely, though it sometimes so falls out, that our words agree not with the things themselves: upon which account, though, in so speaking, we offend indeed against truth, yet we offend not properly by falsehood, which is a speaking against our thoughts; but by rashness, which is an affirming or denying, before we have sufficiently informed ourselves of the real and true estate of those things whereof we affirm or deny.

And thus having shewn *what a lye is, and wherein it does consist*; the next consideration is, of the *lawfulness or unlawfulness of it*. And in this we have but too sad and scandalous an instance both of the corruption and weakness of man's reason, and of the strange bias that it still receives from interest, that such a case as this, both with philosophers and divines, heathens and christians, should be held disputable.

Plato

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Plato accounted it lawful for statesmen and governors, and so did *Cicero* and *Plutarch*; and the *Stoicks* (as some say) reckoned it amongst the arts and perfections of a wise man, to *lye* dexterously, in due time and place. And for some of the ancient doctors of the christian church, such as *Origen*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and *Chrysostom*; and generally, all before *St. Austin*; several passages have fallen from them, that speak but too favourably of this thing: so that *Paul Layman*, a *Romish* Casuist, says, that it is a *truth* but lately known, and received in the world, *that a lye is absolutely sinful, and unlawful.* I suppose he means that part of the world where the scriptures are not read, and where men care not to know, what they are not willing to practise.

But then, for the mitigation of what has proceeded from these great men, we must take in that known and celebrated *division* of a *lye* into those three several kinds of it: As,

1. The *pernicious lye*, uttered for the hurt or disadvantage of our neighbour.

2. The *officious lye*, uttered for our own, or our neighbour's advantage. And,

3. and lastly; The *ludicrous and jocular lye*, uttered by way of jest, and only for mirth's sake, in common converse.

Now,

Now, for the first of these, which is the *pernicious lye*; it was and is universally condemned by all: but the other two have found some patronage from the writings of those fore-mentioned authors. The reason of which seems to be, that those persons did not estimate the *lawfulness*, or *unlawfulness* of a *lye*, from the intrinsic nature of the thing itself, but either from those external effects that it produced, or from those ends to which it was directed; which, accordingly as they proved either *helpful* or *hurtful*, *innocent* or *offensive*, so the *lye* was reputed either lawful or unlawful. And therefore, since a man was helped by an *officious lye*, and not hurt by a *jocose*, both of these came to be esteemed lawful, and, in some cases, laudable.

But the schoolmen and casuists having too much philosophy to go about to clear a *lye* from that intrinsic inordination and deviation from right reason inherent in the nature of it, and yet withal unwilling to rob the world, and themselves especially, of so sweet a morsel of liberty, held, that a *lye* was indeed absolutely and universally *sinful*; but then they held also, that only the *pernicious lye* was a *mortal sin*, and the other two were only *venial*. It can be no part of my business here to overthrow this distinction, and to shew the nullity
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of it ; which has been solidly and sufficiently done by most of our polemick writers of the protestant church : but, at present, I shall only take this their confession, *that every lye is sinful*, and, consequently, *unlawful* ; and if it be a sin, I shall suppose it already proved to my hands, to be, what all sin essentially is, and must be, *mortal* : so that thus far have we gone, and this point have we gained, that *it is absolutely and universally unlawful to lye, or to falsify.*

Let us now, in the next place, inquire *from whence* this unlawfulness springs, and *upon what* it is grounded. To which I answer ; That, upon the principles of natural reason, the unlawfulness of *lying* is grounded upon this, that a *lye* is properly a sort or species of *injustice*, and a violation of the *right* of that person to whom the false speech is directed : for all speaking, or signification of one's mind, implies, in the nature of it, an act, or address of one man to another ; it being evident, that no man, though he does speak false, can be said to lye to himself.

Now to shew what this right is, we must know, that, in the beginnings and first establishments of speech, there was an implicit compact amongst men, founded upon common use and consent, that such and such *words*

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or *voices, actions or gestures*, should be means or signs; whereby they would express or convey their thought one to another; and that men should be obliged to use them for that purpose; forasmuch as, without such an obligation, those signs could not be effectual for such an end: *from which* compact there arising an obligation upon every one so to convey his meaning, there accrues also a right to every one, by the same signs, to judge of the sense or meaning of the person so obliged to express himself; and, consequently, if these signs are applied and used by him so as not to signify his meaning, the right of the person, to whom he was obliged so to have done, is hereby violated; and the man, by being deceived, and kept ignorant of his neighbour's meaning, where he ought to have known it, is so far deprived of the benefit of any intercourse or converse with him.

From hence therefore we see, that the original reason of the unlawfulness of *lying or deceiving*, is, that it carries with it an act of injustice, and a violation of the right of him to whom we were obliged to signify or impart our minds, if we spoke to him at all.

But then we must observe also, (which I noted at first) that, as it is in man's power to institute not only words, but also things, actions,

or

or gestures, to be the means whereby he would signify and express his mind; so, on the other side, those voices, actions, or gestures, which men have not by any compact agreed to make the instruments of conveying their thoughts one to another, are not the proper instruments of deceiving, so as to denominate the person using them a lyar or deceiver, tho' the person, to whom they are addressed, takes occasion from thence, to form in his mind a false apprehension or belief of the thoughts of those who use such voices, actions, or gestures towards him. I say, in this case, the person using these things cannot be said to deceive; since all deception is a misapplying of those signs, which, by compact or institution, were made the means of mens signifying or conveying their thoughts; but here, a man only does those things, from which another takes occasion to deceive himself: which one consideration will solve most of those difficulties, that are usually started on this subject.

But yet, this I do and must grant, that tho' it be not against strict justice or truth for a man to do those things, which he might otherwise lawfully do, albeit his neighbour does take occasion from thence to conceive in his mind a false belief, and so to deceive himself; yet christian charity will, in many cases, restrain

strain a man here too, and prohibit him to use his own right and liberty, where it may turn considerably to his neighbour's prejudice. For herein is the excellency of charity seen, that the charitable man not only does no evil himself, but that, to the utmost of his power, he also hinders any evil from being done even by another.

And, as we have shewn and proved that lying and deceiving stand condemned upon the principles of natural justice, and the eternal law of right reason; so are the same much more condemned, and that with the sanction of the highest penalties, by the law of christianity, which is eminently and transcendently called the truth, and the word of truth; and in nothing more surpasses all the doctrines and religions in the world, than in this, that it enjoins the clearest, the openest, and the sincerest dealing, both in words and actions; and is the rigidest exactor of truth in all our behaviour, of any other doctrine or institution whatsoever.

And thus much for the *first general thing* proposed; which was, *to inquire into the nature of a lye, and the proper, essential malignity of all falsehood.* I proceed now to the

II. *Second*; which is, *to shew the pernicious effects of it.* Some of the chief and most remarkable of which are these that follow: as,

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1. *First* of all, it was this that introduced sin into the world. For how came our first parents to sin, and to lose their primitive innocence? Why, they were deceived, and by the subtilty of the devil brought to *believe a lye*. And indeed deceit is of the very essence and nature of sin, there being no sinful action, but there is a lye wrapt up in the bowels of it. For sin prevails upon the soul by representing that as suitable and desirable, that really is not so: and no man is ever induced to sin, but by a persuasion, that he shall find some good and happiness in it, which he had not before. The wages that sin bargains with the sinner to serve it for, are *life, pleasure, and profit*; but the wages it pays him with, are *death, torment, and destruction*. He that would understand the falshood and deceit of sin thoroughly, must compare its promises and its payments together.

And, as the devil first brought sin into the world by a *lye*, (being equally the base original of both) so he still propagates and promotes it by the same. The devil reigns over none but those whom he first deceives. *Geographers and historians*, dividing the habitable world into *thirty parts*, give us this account of them: That but *five* of those *thirty* are *Christian*; and, for the rest, *six* of them are *Jew* and *Mahometan*, and the remaining *nineteen* perfectly *Heathen*:

Heathen: all which he holds and governs by possessing them with a lye, and bewitching them with a false religion: like the *moon and the stars, he rules by night*; and his kingdom, even in this world, is perfectly a *kingdom of darkness*. And therefore our Saviour, who came to dethrone the devil, and to destroy sin, did it by being *the light of the world*, and by *bearing witness to the truth*. For, so far as truth gets ground in the world, so far sin loses it. Christ saves the world by undeceiving it, and sanctifies the will by first enlightening the understanding.

2. A second effect of *lying and falshood* is, all that misery and calamity that befalls mankind. For the proof of which, we need go no farther than the former consideration: for sorrow being the natural and direct effect of sin, that which first brought sin into the world, must by necessary consequence bring in sorrow too. Shame and pain, poverty and sickness, yea, death and hell itself, are all of them but the trophies of those fatal conquests, got by that grand impostor the devil over the deluded sons of men. And hardly can any example be produced of a man in extreme misery, who was not one way or other first deceived into it. For have not the greatest slaughters of armies been effected by stratagem? and have not the fairest

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fairest estates been destroyed by suretiship? In both of which there is a fallacy, and the man is over-reached, before he is overthrown.

What betrayed and delivered the poor old prophet into the lion's mouth, 1 *Kings* xiii. but the mouth of a false prophet, much the crueller, and more remorseless of the two? How came *John Huffle*, and *Jerom of Prague*, to be so cruelly and basely used by the council of *Constance*, those *ecclesiastical commissioners* of the court of *Rome*? Why, they promised those innocent men a safe conduct, who thereupon took them at their word, and accordingly were burnt alive for trusting a pack of perfidious wretches, who regarded their own word as little as they did God's*.

And how came so many bonfires to be made in queen *Mary's* days? Why, she had abused and deceived her people with lyes, promising them the free exercise of their religion, before she got into the throne; and when she was once in, she performed her promise to them

* Of which last see an instance in the 13th session of this council, in which it decrees, with a non obstante to Christ's express institution of the blessed eucharist in both kinds, that the contrary custom and practice of receiving it only in one kind, ought to be accounted and observed as a law; and that, if the priest should administer it otherwise, he was to be excommunicated.

at the stake. And I know no security we had from seeing the same again in our days, but one or two proclamations forbidding bonfires. Some sorts of promises are edged tools, and it is dangerous laying hold on them.

But to pass from thence to fanatick treachery, that is, from one twin to the other: How came such multitudes of our own nation, at the beginning of that monstrous (but still surviving and successful) rebellion in the year 1641, to be spunged of their plate and money, their rings and jewels, for the carrying on of the schismatical, dissenting, king-killing cause? Why, next to their own love of being cheated, it was the publick, or rather prostitute faith of a company of faithless miscreants, that drew them in, and deceived them. And how came so many thousands to fight and die in the same rebellion? Why, they were deceived into it by those spiritual trumpeters, who followed them with continual alarms of damnation, if they did not venture life, fortune, and all, in that which wickedly and devilishly those impostors called *the cause of God*. So that I myself have heard * one say, (whose quarters have since hung about that city, where he first had been de-

* Colonel Axtell.

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ceived) that he, with many more, went to that execrable war with such a controuling horror upon their spirits, from those * Sermons, that they verily believed they should have been accursed by God for ever, if they had not acted their part in that dismal tragedy, and heartily done the devil's work, being so effectually called and commanded to it in God's Name.

Infinite would it be to pursue all instances of this nature : but consider those grand agents and lieutenants of the devil, by whom he scourges and plagues the world under him, to wit, *Tyrants* ; and was there ever any tyrant since the creation who was not also false and perfidious ? Do not the *bloody* and *deceitful* men still go hand in hand together, in the language of the scripture, *Psal. lv. 23* ? Was ever any people more cruel, and withal more false, than the *Carthaginians* ? And had not the hypocritical contrivers of the murder of that blessed martyr king *Charles* the first, their *masks* and *vizards*, as well as his *executioners* ?

No man that designs to rob another of his estate, or life, will be so impudent or ignorant as, in plain terms, to tell him so : but if it

* He particularly mentioned those of Brooks and Calamy.

be his estate that he drives at, he will dazzle his eyes, and bait him in with the luscious proposal of some gainful purchase, some rich match, or advantageous project, 'till the easy man is caught and hampered; and so, partly by lyes, and partly by law-suits together, comes at length to be stript of all, and brought to a piece of bread, when he can get it. Or, if it be a man's life that the malice of his enemy seeks after, he will not presently clap his pistol to his breast, or his knife to his throat, but will rather take *Abjalom* for his pattern, who invited his dear brother to a feast, hugged, and embraced, courted and carested him, 'till he had well dosed his weak head with wine, and his foolish heart with confidence and credulity; and then, in he brings him an old reckoning, and makes him pay it off with his blood. Or, perhaps, the cut-throat may rather take his copy from the *Parisian massacre*, one of the horridest instances of barbarous inhumanity that ever the world saw, but ushered in with all the pretences of amity, and the festival treats of a reconciling marriage; a new and excellent way (no doubt) of proving matrimony a sacrament. But such butchers know what they have to do; they must sooth and allure before they strike: and the ox must be fed before he is brought to the slaughter; and

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and the same course must be taken with some sort of asses too.

In a word ; I verily believe, that no sad disaster ever yet beset any person or people, nor any villainy, or flagitious action was ever yet committed, but, upon a due inquiry into the causes of it, it will be found, that a *lye* was, first or last, the principal engine to effect it : and that, whether *pride*, *lust*, or *cruelty* brought it forth, it was *falshood* that begot it ; this gave it *being*, whatsoever other vice might give it *birth*.

3. As we have seen how much *lying* and *falshood* disturbs ; so, in the next place, we shall see also, how it tends utterly to dissolve society. There is no doubt but all the safety, happiness, and convenience that men enjoy in this life, is from the combination of particular persons into societies or corporations : the cause of which is compact ; and the band that knits together, and supports all compacts, is truth and faithfulness : so that the soul and spirit that animates and keeps up society, is *mutual trust* ; and the foundation of *trust*, is *truth* either *known*, or at least *supposed*, in the persons so trusted.

But now, where *fraud* and *falshood*, like a plague or canker, comes once to invade society, the band which held together the parts

compounding it, presently breaks, and men are thereby put to a loss where to league and to fasten their dependencies, and so are forced to scatter and shift every one for himself: upon which account every notoriously false person ought to be looked upon and detested as a *publick enemy*, and to be pursued as a wolf, or a mad dog, and a disturber of the common peace and welfare of mankind; there being no particular person whatsoever but has his private interest concerned and endangered in the mischief that such a wretch does to the publick.

For look into great families, and you shall find some one false, paltry tale-bearer, who, by carrying stories from one to another, shall inflame the minds, and discompose the quiet of the whole family: and from families pass to towns or cities, and two or three *pragmatical, intriguing, meddling* fellows, (*men of business* some call them) by the venom of their false tongues, shall set the whole neighbourhood together by the ears. Where men practice falshood, and shew tricks with one another, there will be perpetual suspicions, evil surmisings, doubts, and jealousies, which, by souring the minds of men, are the bane and pest of society; for still society is built upon
trust,

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trust, and trust upon the *confidence* that men have of one another's integrity.

And this is so evident, that, without *trusting*, there could not only be no happiness, but indeed no living in this world : for in those very things that minister to the daily necessities of common life, how can *any one* be assured that the very meat and drink that he is to take into his body, and the cloaths he is to put on, are not poisoned, and made unwholsome for him, before ever they are brought to him ? nay, in some places (with horror be it spoke) how can a man be secure in taking the very sacrament itself ? for there have been those who have found something in this spiritual food, that has proved very fatal to their bodies, and more than *prepared them* for another world : I say, how can any one warrant himself in the use of these things against such suspicions, but in the trust he has in the common honesty and truth of men in general, which ought, and uses to keep them from such villainies ? *Nevertheless*, know this certainly before-hand he cannot, forasmuch as such things have been done, and, consequently, may be done again ; and therefore, as for any *infallible assurance* to the contrary, he can have none : but, in the great concerns of *life* and *health*, every man must be forced to proceed

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upon *trust*; there being no knowing the *intention* of the *cook* or *baker*, any more than of the *priest himself*. And yet, if a man should forbear his food, or raiment, or most of his business in the world, till he had science and certainty of the safeness of what he was going about, he must starve, and die disputing; for there is neither eating, nor drinking, nor living by demonstration.

Now this shews the high malignity of *fraud* and *falsehood*, that, in the direct and natural course of it, tends to the destruction of common life, by destroying that *trust* and *mutual confidence* that men would have in one another, by which the common intercourse of the world must be carried on, and without which men must first *distrust*, and then *divide, separate*, and *stand upon their guard*, with their hand against every one, and every one's hand against them.

The felicity of societies and bodies politick consists in this, that all relations in them do regularly discharge their respective duties and offices; such as are the relation between *prince and subject, master and servant, a man and his friend, husband and wife, parent and child, buyer and seller*, and the like. But now, where *fraud* and *falsehood* take place, there is not one of all these that is not perverted, and that does
not,

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not, from an help of society, directly become an hindrance : for, first, it turns all above us into tyranny and barbarity ; and all of the same region and level with us, into discord and confusion. It is this alone that poisons that sovereign and divine thing called *friendship* ; so that when a man thinks that he leans upon a breast as loving and true to him as his own, he finds that he relies upon a *broken reed*, that not only basely fails, but also cruelly pierces the hand that rests upon it : it is from this, that when a man thinks he has a servant, or dependent, an instrument of his affairs, and a defence of his person, he finds a *traitor* and a *Judas*, an enemy that eats his bread, and lies under his roof, and perhaps readier to do him a mischief, and a shrewd turn, than an open and professed adversary. And, lastly, from this *deceit* and *falshood* it is, that when a man thinks himself matched to one, who, by the laws of God and nature, should be a comfort to him in all conditions, a consort of his cares, and a companion in all his concerns, instead thereof, he finds in his bosom a *beast*, a *serpent*, and a *devil*.

In a word : He that has to do with a *liar*, knows not where he is, nor what he does, nor with whom he deals ; he walks upon bogs and whirl-pools ; wheresoever he treads, he sinks,
and

and converses with a bottomless pit, where it is impossible for him to fix, or to be at any certainty : in fine, he catches at an *apple of Sodom*, which, though it may entertain his eye with a florid, jolly *white* and *red*, yet, upon the touch, it shall fill his hand only with stench and foulness ; fair in look, and rotten at heart ; as the gayest and most taking things and persons in the world generally are.

4. And lastly : *Deceit* and *falsehood* do, of all other ill qualities, most peculiarly indispose the hearts of men to the impressions of religion ; for these are sins perfectly spiritual, and so prepossess the proper seat and place of religion, which is the soul or spirit : and, when that is once filled and taken up with a *lye*, there will hardly be admission or room for truth. Christianity is known in scripture by no name so significantly, as by the *simplicity of the gospel*.

And if so, does it not look like the greatest paradox and prodigy in nature, for any one to pretend it lawful to equivocate or lye for it ? to face God, and outface man, with the sacrament and a lye in one's mouth together ? Can a good intention, or rather a very wicked one, so miscalled, sanctify and transform perjury and hypocrisy into merit and perfection ? or, can there be a greater blot cast upon any church,

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church, or religion, (whatsoever it be) than by such a practice? for, will not the world be induced to look upon my religion as a *lye*, if I allow myself to *lye* for my religion?

The very life and soul of all religion is sincerity: and therefore, the *good ground* in which alone *the immortal seed of the word* sprang up to perfection, is said, in St. Luke viii. 15. to have been those that *received it into an honest heart*; that is, a plain, clear, and well-meaning heart; an heart not doubled, nor cast into the various folds and windings of a dodging, shifting hypocrisy: for the truth is, the more spiritual and refined any sin is, the more hardly is the soul cured of it; because the more difficultly convinced: and in all our spiritual maladies, conviction must still begin the cure.

Such sins indeed as are acted by the body, do quickly shew and proclaim themselves; and it is no such hard matter to convince or run down a drunkard, or an unclean person, and to stop their mouths, and to answer any pretences that they can alledge for their sin: but *deceit* is such a sin as a *Pharisee* may be guilty of, and yet stand fair for the reputation of zeal and strictness, and a more than ordinary exactness in religion: and though some have been apt to account none sinful or vicious

cious, but such as wallow in the mire and dirt of gross sensuality ; yet, no doubt, *deceit*, *falsehood*, and *hypocrisy* are more directly contrary to the very essence and design of religion, and carry in them more of the express image and superscription of the devil, than any bodily sins whatsoever. How did that *false*, *fasting*, *imperious*, *self-admiring*, or rather *self-adoring* hypocrite, in St. *Luke* xviii. 11. crow and insult over the poor publican ! *God, I thank thee*, says he, *that I am not like other men*. And God forbid (say I) that there should be many others like him, for a glistering outside, and a noisome inside, for *tything mint and cummin*, and for *devouring widows houses* ; that is, for taking ten parts from his neighbour, and putting God off with one. After all which, had this man of merit and mortification been called to account for his ungodly swallow, in gorging down the estates of helpless *widows* and *orphans*, it is odds but he would have told you, that it was all for charitable uses, and to afford pensions for *spyes* and *profelytes* : it being no ordinary piece of spiritual good-husbandry, to be charitable at other mens cost.

But such sons of *Abraham*, how highly soever they may have the luck to be thought of, are far from being *Israelites indeed* ; for the character that our Saviour gives us of such,

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in the person of *Nathanael*, in *John* i. 47. is, *that they are without guile.* To be so, I confess, is generally reckoned (of late times especially) a poor, mean, sneaking thing ; and the contrary, reputed wit and parts, and *fitness for business* (as the word is) : though I doubt not but it will be one day found, that only honesty and integrity can fit a man for the main business that he was sent into the world for ; and that he certainly is the *greatest wit*, who is *wise to salvation.*

And thus much for the second general thing proposed ; which was, *to shew the pernicious effects of lying and falshood.* Come we now to the

III. and last ; which is, *to lay before you the rewards or punishments that will assuredly attend, or, at least, follow this base practice.*

I shall mention three : As,

1. *An utter loss of all credit and belief with sober and discreet persons ;* and consequently, of all capacity of being useful in the prime and noblest concerns of life : for there cannot be imagined in nature a more forlorn, useles, and contemptible tool, or more unfit for any thing, than a discovered cheat ; and let men rest assured of this, that there will be always some as able to discover and find out deceitful tricks, as others can be to contrive them :

for,

for, God forbid that all the wit and cunning of the world should still run on the deceiver's side ; and when such little shifts and shuffling arts come once to be ripped up, and laid open, how poorly and wretchedly must that man needs sneak, who finds himself both guilty and baffled too ! A knave without luck, is certainly the worst trade in the world : but truth makes the face of that person shine, who speaks and owns it ; while a *lye* is like a vizard, that may cover the face, indeed, but can never become it ; nor yet does it cover it so, but that it leaves it open enough for shame ; it brands a man with a lasting, indelible character of ignominy and reproach, and that indeed so foul and odious, that those usurping hectors, who pretend to *honour* without religion, think the charge of a *lye*, a blot upon them not to be washed out, but by the blood of him that *gives it*.

For what place can that man fill in a commonwealth, whom no body will either believe, or emply ? and no man can be considerable in himself, who has not made himself useful to others ; nor can any man be so, who is incapable of a trust : he is neither fit for counsel or friendship, for service or command, to be in office or in honour ; but, like salt

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salt that has lost its flavour, fit only to rot and perish upon a dunghil.

For no man can rely upon such an one, either with safety to his affairs, or without a slur to his reputation; since he that trusts a *knave*, has no other recompence, but to be accounted a *fool* for his pains: and if he trusts himself into ruin and beggary, he falls unpitied, a sacrifice to his own folly and credulity; for he that suffers himself to be imposed upon by a known *deceiver*, goes partner in the cheat, and deceives himself; he is despised, and laughed at, as a soft and easy person, and as unfit to be relied upon for his weakness, as the other can be for his falseness.

It is really a great misery not to know *whom to trust*, but a much greater to behave one's self so, *as not to be trusted*. But this is the lyar's lot, he is accounted a pest, and a nuisance, a person marked out for infamy and scorn, and abandoned by all men of sense and worth, and such as will not *abandon themselves*.

2. The second reward or punishment that attends the *lying and deceitful person*, is the *hatred* of all those, whom he either *has*, or *would have deceived*. I do not say, that a christian can lawfully hate any one; and yet I affirm, that some may *very worthily* deserve to be hated; and of *all men* living, who may

or do, the deceiver certainly deserves it most. To which I shall add this one remark further; that tho' men's persons ought not to be hated, yet, without all peradventure, their practices justly may, and particularly that detestable one, which we are now speaking of.

For whosoever deceives a man, does not only do all that he can to ruin him, but, which is yet worse, to make him ruin himself; and, by causing an error in the great guide of all his actions, his *judgment*, to cause an error in his *choice* too; the misguidance of which must naturally engage him in those courses, that directly tend to his destruction. Loss of sight is the misery of life, and usually the forerunner of death: when the malefactor comes once to be muffled, and the fatal cloth drawn over his eyes, we know that he is not far from his execution.

And this is so true, that whosoever sees a man, who would have beguiled and imposed upon him by making him *believe a lye*, he may truly say of that person; That's the man who would have ruined me, who would have stripped me of the dignity of my nature, and put out the eyes of my reason, to make himself sport with my calamity, my folly, and my dishonour. For so the *Philistines* used *Samson*; and every man, in this sad case, has
enough

enough of *Samson* to be his own executioner. Accordingly, if it ever comes to this, that a man can say of his *confident*, *He would have deceived me*, he has said enough to annihilate and abolish all pretences of friendship. And it is really an intolerable impudence, for any one to offer at the name of friend after such an attempt. For can there be any thing of friendship in snares, hooks, and trapans? And therefore, whosoever breaks with his friend upon such terms, has enough to warrant him in so doing, both before *God* and *man*; and that without incurring either the guilt of unfaithfulness before the one, or the blemish of inconstancy before the other. For this is not properly to *break with a friend*, but to discover an enemy, and timely to shake the viper off from one's hand.

What says the most wise author of that excellent book of *Ecclesiasticus*, Ecclus. xxii. 21, 22? *Tho' thou drewest a sword at thy friend, yet despair not; for there may be a returning to favour. If thou hast opened thy mouth against thy friend, fear not; for there may be a reconciliation.* That is, an hasty word, or an indiscreet action, does not presently dissolve the bond, or root out a well-settled habit, but that friendship may be still sound at heart; and so outgrow and wear off these little distempers.

But what follows? *Except for upbraiding, or disclosing of secrets, or a treacherous wound* (mark that): *for for these things* (says he) *every friend will depart.* And surely it is high time for him to go, when such a devil drives him away. Passion, anger, and unkindness, may give a wound that shall bleed and smart; but it is treachery only, that makes it fester.

And the reason of the difference is manifest: for hasty words, or blows, may be only the effects of a sudden passion, during which a man is not perfectly himself: but no man goes about to deceive, or insnare, or circumvent another, in a passion; to lay trains, and set traps, and give secret blows, in a present huff. No; this is always done with forecast and design, with a steady-aiming, and a long-projecting malice, assisted with all the skill and art of an expert, and well-managed hypocrisy; and perhaps, not without the pharisaical feigned guise of something like self-denial and mortification; which are things, in which the whole man, and the whole devil too, are employed, and all the powers and faculties of the mind are exerted, and made use of.

But for all these masks and vizards, nothing certainly can be thought of, or imagined, more base, inhuman, or diabolical, than for one to abuse the generous confidence, and hearty freedom

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dom of his friend, and to undermine and ruin him in those very concerns, which nothing but too great a respect to, and too good an opinion of the traitor, made the poor man deposit in his hollow and fallacious breast. Such an one perhaps thinks to find some support and shelter in my friendship, and I take that opportunity to betray him to his mortal enemies: he comes to me for counsel, and I shew him a trick: he opens his bosom to me, and I stab him to the heart.

These are the practices of the world we live in; especially since the *year sixty*, the grand *epoch* of falshood, as well as debauchery. But God, who is the great Guarantee for the peace, order, and good behaviour of mankind, where laws cannot secure it, may, some time or other, think it the concern of his justice and providence too, to revenge the affronts put upon them by such impudent defiers of both, as neither believe a God, nor ought to be believed by man.

In the mean time, let such perfidious wretches know, that tho' they believe a devil no more than they do a God, yet in all this scene of refined treachery, they are really doing the devil's journey-work, who was a *lyar* and a *murderer* from the beginning, and therefore a *lyar*, that he might be a *murderer*: and the

truth is, such an one does all towards his brother's ruin, that the devil himself could do : for the devil can but tempt and deceive ; and if he cannot destroy a man that way, his power is at an end.

But I cannot dismiss this head, without one farther note, as very material in the case now before us ; namely, that since this false, wily, doubling disposition of mind is so intolerably mischievous to society, God is sometimes pleased, in mere pity and compassion to men, to give them warning of it, by setting some odd *mark* upon such *Cains*. So that if a man will be but so true to himself, as to observe such persons exactly, he shall generally spy such false lines, and such a *fly*, *treacherous fleer* upon their face, that he shall be sure to have a *cast of their eye* to warn him, before they give him a *cast of their nature* to betray him : and in such cases, a man may see more and better *by another's eye*, than he can by *his own*.

Let this therefore be the second reward of the *lying and deceitful person*, that he is the *object of a just hatred and abhorrence*. For as the devil is both a *liar himself*, and the *father of liars* ; so, I think, that the same cause that has drawn the hatred of God and man upon the father, may justly entail it upon his offspring too ; and it is pity that such an entail should ever be cut off. But,

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3. and lastly : The last and utmost reward, that shall infallibly reach the *fraudulent* and *deceitful*, (as it will all other obstinate and impenitent sinners) is, a final and eternal separation *from God*, who is Truth itself, and with whom no shadow of falshood can dwell. *He that telleth lyes* (says *David*, in *Psal.* ci. 7.) *shall not tarry in my sight* : and, if not in the sight of a poor mortal man, (who could sometimes lye himself) how much less in the presence of the Infinite and All-knowing God : A wise and good prince or governor will not vouchsafe a *lyar* the countenance of his eye, and much less the privilege of his ear. The Spirit of God seems to write this upon the very gates of heaven, and to state the condition of mens entrance into glory, chiefly upon their veracity. In *Psal.* xv. 1. *Who shall ascend into thy holy hill?* (says the *Psalmist*) To which it is answered, in *ver.* 2. *He that worketh righteousness, and that speaketh the truth from his heart.*

And, on the other side, how emphatically is *hell* described in the *the two last chapters of the Revelation*, by being the great receptacle and mansion-house of *lyars*, whom he shall find there ranged with the vilest and most detestable of all sinners appointed to have their portion in that horrid place ! *Rev.* xxi. 8. *The unbelieving,*

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believing, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all lyars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone : And in Rev. xxii. 15. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, &c. and whosoever loveth and maketh a lye.

Now let those consider this, whose tongue and heart hold no correspondence ; who look upon it as a piece of art and wisdom, and the master-piece of conversation, to over-reach and deceive, and make a prey of a credulous and well-meaning honesty. What do such persons think ? *Are dogs, whoremongers, and sorcerers* such desirable company to take up with for ever ? Will the *burning lake* be found so tolerable ? Or, will there be any one to drop refreshment upon the *false tongue*, when it shall be *tormented in those flames* ? Or, do they think that God is a liar like themselves, and that no such things shall ever come to pass, but that all these fiery threatnings shall vanish into *smoke*, and this dreadful sentence blow off without execution ? Few certainly can *lye* to their own hearts so far, as to imagine this : but *hell* is, and must be granted to be the deceiver's portion, not only by the judgment of God, but of his own conscience too : and, comparing the malignity of his sin with the nature of the punishment allotted for him, all
that

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that can be said of a *liar* lodged in the very nethermost hell, is this; that if the vengeance of God could prepare any place or condition worse than hell for sinners, hell itself would be too good for him.

And now to sum up all in short: I have shewn *what a lye is*, and *wherein the nature of falshood does consist*; that it is a thing absolutely and intrinsically evil; that it is an act of injustice, and a violation of our neighbour's right.

And that the vileness of its nature is equalled by the malignity of its *effects*; it being this that first brought sin into the world, and is since the cause of all those miseries and calamities that disturb it; and farther, that it tends utterly to dissolve and overthrow society, which is the greatest temporal blessing and support of mankind: and which is yet worst of all, that it has a strange and particular efficacy, above all other sins, to indispose the heart to religion.

And, lastly; That it is as dreadful in its punishments, as it has been pernicious in its effects: forasmuch as it deprives a man of all credit and belief, and consequently of all capacity of being useful in any station or condition of life whatsoever; and next, that it draws upon him the just and universal hatred and abhor-

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abhorrence of all men here; and, finally, subjects him to the wrath of God, and eternal damnation hereafter.

And now, if none of all these considerations can recommend and endear truth to the words and practices of men, and work upon their double hearts, so far as to convince and make them sensible of the baseness of the sin, and greatness of the guilt, that *fraud* and *falsehood* leaves upon the soul; let them *lye* and *cheat* on, 'till they receive a fuller and more effectual conviction of all these things, in that place of torment and confusion *prepared for the devil and his angels*, and all his *lying* retinue, by the decree and sentence of that God, who in his threatnings, as well as in his promises, will be *true to his word, and cannot ly*.

To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now, and for evermore.
Amen.



The END of VOL. I.